STRICTURES

ON THE

MODERN SYSTEM

OF

FEMALE EDUCATION.

VOL. I.

Domeſtic Happineſs, thou only bliſs
Of Paradiſe that has furviv'd the Fall!
Thou art not known where PLEASURE is ador'd,
That reeling Goddeſs with the zoneleſs waiſt.
Forſaking thee, what ſhipwreck have we made
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown!

COWPER.

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WITH

A VIEW OF THE PRINCIPLES AND CONDUCT PREVALENT AMONG WOMEN OF RANK AND FORTUNE.

By HANNAH MORE.

May you so raise your character that you may help to make the next age a better thing, and leave posterity in your debt, for the advantage it shall receive by your example. LORD HALIFAX.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is a ſingular injuſtice which is often exerciſed towards women, firſt to give them a very defective Education, and then to expect from them the moſt undeviating purity of conduct;—to train them in ſuch a manner as ſhall lay them open to the moſt dangerous faults, and then to cenſure them for not proving faultleſs. Is it not unreaſonable and unjuſt, to expreſs diſappointment if our daughters ſhould, in their ſubſequent lives, turn out preciſely that very kind of character for which it would be evident to an unprejudiced by-ſtander that the whole ſcope and tenor of their inſtruction had been ſyſtematically preparing them?

Some reflections on the preſent erroneous ſyſtem are here with great deference ſubmitted to public conſideration. The

Author is apprehenſive that ſhe ſhall be accuſed of betraying the intereſts of her ſex by laying open their defects: but ſurely, an earneſt wiſh to turn their attention to objects calculated to promote their true dignity, is not the office of an enemy. So to expoſe the weakneſs of the land as to ſuggeſt the neceſſity of internal improvement, and to point out the means of effectual defence, is not treachery, but patriotiſm.

Again it may be objected to this little work, that many errors are here aſcribed to women which by no means belong to them *excluſively*, and that it ſeems to confine to the ſex thoſe faults which are common to the ſpecies: but this is in ſome meaſure unavoidable. In ſpeaking on the qualities of one ſex, the moraliſt is ſomewhat in the ſituation of the Geographer, who is treating on the nature of one country;—the air, ſoil, and produce of the land which he is deſcribing, cannot fail in many eſſential points to reſemble

thoſe of other countries under the ſame parallel; yet it is his buſineſs to deſcant on the one without adverting to the other; and though in drawing his map he may happen to introduce ſome of the neighbouring coaſt, yet his principal attention muſt be confined to that country which he propoſes to deſcribe, without taking into account the reſembling circumſtances of the adjacent ſhores.

It may be alſo objected that the opinion here ſuggeſted on the ſtate of manners among the higher claſſes of our countrywomen, may ſeem to controvert the juſt encomiums of modern travellers, who generally concur in aſcribing a decided ſuperiority to the ladies of this country over thoſe of every other. But ſuch is the ſtate of foreign manners, that the comparative praiſe is almoſt an injury to *Engliſh* women. To be flattered for excelling thoſe whoſe ſtandard of excellence is very low, is but a degrading kind of commendation; for the

value of all praiſe derived from ſuperiority depends on the worth of the competitor. The character of Britiſh ladies, with all the unparalleled advantages they poſſeſs, muſt never be determined by a compariſon with the women of other nations, but by what they themſelves might be if all their talents and unrivalled opportunities were turned to the beſt account.

Again, it may be ſaid, that the Author is leſs diſpoſed to expatiate on excellence than error: but the office of the hiſtorian of human manners is delineation rather than panegyric. Were the end in view eulogium and not improvement, eulogium would have been far more gratifying, nor would juſt objects for praiſe have been difficult to find. Even in her own limited ſphere of obſervation, the Author is acquainted with much excellence in the claſs of which ſhe treats;—with women who, poſſeſſing learning which would be thought extenſive in the other ſex, ſet an example of deep humility to their own;—

women

women who, distinguished for wit and genius, are eminent for domestic qualities;—who, excelling in the fine arts, have carefully enriched their understandings;—who, enjoying great affluence, devote it to the glory of God;—who, possessing elevated rank, think their noblest style and title is that of a Christian.

That there is also much worth which is little known, she is persuaded; for it is the modest nature of goodness to exert itself quietly, while a few characters of the opposite cast seem, by the rumour of their exploits to fill the world; and by their noise to multiply their numbers. It often happens that a very small party of people, by occupying the fore-ground, so seize the public attention, and monopolize the public talk, that *they* appear to be the great body: and a few active spirits, provided their activity take the wrong turn and support the wrong cause, seem to fill the scene; and a few disturbers of order, who have the talent of thus exciting a false

idea

idea of their multitudes by their miſchiefs, actually gain ſtrength and ſwell their numbers by this fallacious arithmetic.

But the preſent work is no more intended for a panegyric on thoſe purer characters who ſeek not human praiſe becauſe they act from a higher motive, than for a ſatire on the avowedly licentious, who, urged by the impulſe of the moment, reſiſt no inclination, and, led away by the love of faſhion, diſlike no cenſure, ſo it may ſerve to reſcue them from neglect or oblivion.

There are, however, multitudes of the young and the well-diſpoſed, who have as yet taken no decided part, who are juſt launching on the ocean of life, juſt about to loſe their own right convictions, virtually preparing to counteract their better propenſities, and unreluctantly yielding themſelves to be carried down the tide of popular practices, ſanguine, thoughtleſs, and confident of ſafety.—To theſe the Author would gently hint, that, when once embarked, it will be no longer eaſy to ſay

to their paſſions, or even to their principles, "Thus far ſhall ye go, and no further." Their ſtruggles will grow fainter, their reſiſtance will become feebler, till borne down by the confluence of example, temptation, appetite, and habit, reſiſtance and oppoſition will ſoon be the only things of which they will learn to be aſhamed.

Should any reader revolt at what is conceived to be unwarranted ſtrictneſs in this little book, let it not be thrown by in diſguſt before the following ſhort conſideration be weighed.——If in this Chriſtian country we are actually beginning to regard the ſolemn office of Baptiſm as merely furniſhing an article to the pariſh regiſter; — if we are learning from our indefatigable Teachers, to conſider this Chriſtian rite as a legal ceremony retained for the ſole purpoſe of recording the *age* of our children;—then, indeed, the prevailing Syſtem of Education and Manners on which theſe volumes preſume to animadvert, may be adopted with pro-

priety

priety and perſiſted in with ſafety, without entailing on our children or on ourſelves the peril of broken promiſes or the guilt of violated vows.——But, if the obligation which Chriſtian Baptiſm impoſes be really binding;—if the ordinance have, indeed, a meaning beyond a mere ſecular tranſaction, beyond a record of names and dates;—if it be an inſtitution by which the child is ſolemnly devoted to God as his Father, to Jeſus Chriſt as his Saviour, and to the Holy Spirit as his Sanctifier; if there be no definite period aſſigned when the obligation of fulfilling the duties it enjoins ſhall be ſuperſeded;—if, having once dedicated our offspring to their Creator, we no longer dare to mock Him by bringing them up in ignorance of His Will and neglect of His Laws;—if, after having enliſted them under the banners of Chriſt, to fight manfully againſt the three great enemies of mankind, we are no longer at liberty to let them lay down their arms; much

leſs

neſs to lead them to act as if they were in alliance inſtead of hoſtility with theſe enemies;—if after having promiſed that they ſhall renounce the vanities of the world, we are not allowed to invalidate the engagement;—if after ſuch a covenant we ſhould tremble to make theſe renounced vanities the ſupreme object of our own purſuit or of *their* inſtruction;—if all this be really ſo, then the Strictures on Modern Education in the firſt of theſe Volumes, and on the Habits of poliſhed Life in the ſecond, will not be found ſo repugnant to truth, and reaſon, and common ſenſe, as may on a firſt view be ſuppoſed.

But if on candidly ſumming up the evidence, the deſign and ſcope of the Author be fairly judged, not by the cuſtoms or opinions of the worldly, (for every Engliſh ſubject has a right to object to a ſuſpected or prejudiced jury,) but by an appeal to that divine law which is the only infallible rule of judgment; if on ſuch an appeal her views and principles ſhall be found cenſur-

able

able for their rigour, abſurd in their requiſitions, or prepoſterous in their reſtrictions, ſhe will have no right to complain of ſuch a verdict, becauſe ſhe will then ſtand condemned by that court to whoſe deciſion ſhe implicitly ſubmits.

Let it not be ſuſpected that the Author arrogantly conceives herſelf to be exempt from that natural corruption of the heart which it is one chief object of this ſlight work to exhibit; that ſhe ſuperciliouſly erects herſelf into the impeccable cenſor of her ſex and of the world; as if from the critic's chair ſhe were coldly pointing out the faults and errors of another order of beings, in whoſe welfare ſhe had not that lively intereſt which can only flow from the tender and intimate participation of fellow-feeling.

With a deep ſelf-abaſement ariſing from a ſtrong conviction of being indeed a partaker in the ſame corrupt nature; together with a full perſuaſion of the many and great defects of theſe Volumes, and a ſincere conſciouſneſs

ſciouſneſs of her inability to do juſtice to a ſubject which, however, a ſenſe of duty impelled her to undertake, ſhe commits herſelf to the candour of that Public which has ſo frequently, in her inſtance, accepted a right intention as a ſubſtitute for a powerful performance.

BATH,
March 14, 1799.

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CHAP. I.

Addreſs to women of rank and fortune, on the effects of their influence on ſociety.—Suggeſtions for the exertion of it in various inſtances.

AMONG the talents for the application of which women of the higher claſs will be peculiarly accountable, there is one, the importance of which they can ſcarcely rate too highly. This talent is influence. We read of the greateſt orator of antiquity, that the wiſeſt plans which it had coſt him years to frame, a woman could overturn

in a ſingle day; and when one conſiders the variety of miſchiefs which an ill-directed influence has been known to produce, one is led to reflect with the moſt ſanguine hope on the beneficial effects to be expected from the ſame powerful force when exerted in its true direction.

The general ſtate of civilized ſociety depends more than thoſe are aware who are not accuſtomed to ſcrutinize into the ſprings of human action, on the prevailing ſentiments and habits of women, and on the nature and degree of the eſtimation in which they are held. Even thoſe who admit the power of female elegance on the manners of men, do not always attend to the influence of female principles on their character. In the former caſe, indeed, women are apt to be ſufficiently conſcious of their power, and not backward in turning it to account. But there are nobler objects to be effected by the exertion of their powers, and unfortunately, ladies, who are often unreaſonably confident where they ought to be diffident,

are

are ſometimes capriciouſly diffident juſt when they ought to feel where their true importance lies; and feeling, to exert it. To uſe their boaſted power over mankind to no higher purpoſe than the gratification of vanity or the indulgence of pleaſure, is the degrading triumph of thoſe fair victims to luxury, caprice, and deſpotiſm, whom the laws and the religion of the voluptuous prophet of Arabia exclude from light, and liberty, and knowledge; and it is humbling to reflect, that in thoſe countries in which fondneſs for the mere perſons of women is carried to the higheſt exceſs, *they are ſlaves*; and that their moral and intellectual degradation increaſes in direct proportion to the adoration which is paid to mere external charms.

But I turn to the bright reverſe of this mortifying ſcene; to a country where our ſex enjoys the bleſſings of liberal inſtruction, of reaſonable laws, of a pure religion, and all the endearing pleaſures of an equal, ſocial, virtuous, and delightful intercourſe: I turn with an

earneſt hope, that women, thus richly endowed with the bounties of Providence, will not content themſelves with poliſhing, when they are able to reform; with entertaining, when they may awaken; and with captivating for a day, when they may bring into action powers of which the effects may be commenſurate with eternity.

In this moment of alarm and peril, I would call on them with a "warning "voice," which ſhould ſtir up every latent principle in their minds, and kindle every ſlumbering energy in their hearts; I would call on them to come forward, and contribute their full and fair proportion towards the ſaving of their country. But I would call on them to come forward, without departing from the refinement of their character, without derogating from the dignity of their rank, without blemiſhing the delicacy of their ſex: I would call them to the beſt and moſt appropriate exertion of their power, to raiſe the depreſſed tone of public morals, and to awaken the drowſy ſpirit of religious principle.

ciple. They know too well how arbitrarily they give the law to manners, and with how deſpotic a ſway they fix the ſtandard of faſhion. But this is not enough; this is a low mark, a prize not worthy of their high and holy calling. For, on the uſe which women of the ſuperior claſs may now be diſpoſed to make of that power delegated to them by the courteſy of cuſtom, by the honeſt gallantry of the heart, by the imperious control of virtuous affections, by the habits of civilized ſtates, by the uſages of poliſhed ſociety; on the uſe, I ſay, which they ſhall hereafter make of this influence, will depend, in no low degree, the well-being of thoſe ſtates, and the virtue and happineſs, nay perhaps the very exiſtence, of that ſociety.

At this period, when our country can only hope to ſtand by oppoſing a bold and noble *unanimity* to the moſt tremendous confederacies againſt religion, and order, and governments, which the world ever

ſaw; what an acceſſion would it bring to the public ſtrength, could we prevail on beauty, and rank, and talents, and virtue, confederating their ſeveral powers, to come forward with a patriotiſm at once firm and feminine, for the general good! I am not ſounding an alarm to female warriors, or exciting female politicians: I hardly know which of the two is the moſt diſguſting and unnatural character. Propriety is to a woman what the great Roman critic ſays action is to an orator; it is the firſt, the ſecond, the third requiſite. A woman may be knowing, active, witty, and amuſing; but without propriety ſhe cannot be amiable. Propriety is the centre in which all the lines of duty and of agreeableneſs meet. It is to character what proportion is to figure, and grace to attitude. It does not depend on any one perfection, but it is the reſult of general excellence. It ſhews itſelf by a regular, orderly, undeviating courſe; and never ſtarts from its ſober orbit into any ſplendid eccentricities; for

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it would be aſhamed of ſuch praiſe as it might extort by any aberrations from its proper path. It renounces all commendation but what is characteriſtic; and I would make it the criterion of true taſte, right principle, and genuine feeling, in a woman, whether ſhe would be leſs touched with all the flattery of romantic and exaggerated panegyric than with that beautiful picture of correct and elegant propriety, which Milton draws of our firſt mother, when he delineates

"Thoſe thouſand *decencies* which daily flow
"From all her words and actions."

Even the influence of religion is to be exerciſed with diſcretion. A female Polemic wanders nearly as far from the limits preſcribed to her ſex, as a female Machiavel or warlike Thaleſtris. Fierceneſs has made almoſt as few converts as the ſword, and both are peculiarly ungraceful in a female. Even *religious* violence has human tempers of its own to indulge,

and is gratifying itſelf when it would be thought to be ſerving God. Let not the bigot place her natural paſſions to the account of Chriſtianity, or imagine ſhe is pious when ſhe is only paſſionate. Let her bear in mind that a Chriſtian doctrine is always to be defended with a Chriſtian ſpirit, and not make herſelf amends by the ſtoutneſs of her orthodoxy for the badneſs of her temper. Many, becauſe they defend a religious opinion with pertinacity, ſeem to fancy that they thereby acquire a kind of right to withhold the obedience which ſhould be neceſſarily involved in the principle.

But the character of a conſiſtent Chriſtian is as carefully to be maintained, as that of a fiery diſputant is to be avoided; and ſhe who is afraid to avow her principles, or aſhamed to defend them, has little claim to that honourable title. A profligate, who laughs at the moſt ſacred inſtitutions, and keeps out of the way of every thing which comes under the appearance of formal inſtruction, may be diſ-

concerted

concerted by the modeſt, but ſpirited rebuke of a delicate woman, whoſe life adorns the doctrines which her converſation defends: but ſhe who adminiſters reproof with ill-breeding, defeats the effect of her remedy. On the other hand, there is a diſhoneſt way of labouring to conciliate the favour of a whole company, though of characters and principles irreconcilably oppoſite. The words may be ſo guarded as not to ſhock the believer, while the eye and voice may be ſo accommodated, as not to diſcourage the infidel. She who, with a half earneſtneſs, trims between the truth and the faſhion; who, while ſhe thinks it creditable to defend the cauſe of religion, yet does it in a faint tone, a ſtudied ambiguity of phraſe, and a certain expreſſion in her countenance, which proves that ſhe is not diſpleaſed with what ſhe affects to cenſure, or that ſhe is afraid to loſe her reputation for wit, in proportion as ſhe advances her credit for piety, injures the cauſe more

than

than he who attacked it; for ſhe proves, either that ſhe does not believe what ſhe profeſſes, or that ſhe does not reverence what fear compels her to believe. But this is not all: ſhe is called on, not barely to repreſs impiety, but to excite, to encourage, and to cheriſh every tendency to ſerious religion.

Some of the occaſions of contributing to the general good which are daily preſenting themſelves to ladies, are almoſt too minute to be pointed out. Yet of the good which right-minded women, anxiouſly watching theſe minute occaſions, and adroitly ſeizing them, might accompliſh, we may form ſome idea by the ill-effects which we actually ſee produced, through the mere levity, careleſneſs, and inattention (to ſay no worſe) of ſome of thoſe ladies, who are looked up to as ſtandards in the faſhionable world.

I am perſuaded, if many a one, who is now diſſeminating unintended miſchief, under the dangerous notion that there

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is no harm in any thing ſhort of poſitive vice, and under the falſe colours of that indolent humility, "What good can *I* "do?" could be brought to ſee in its collected force the annual aggregate of the random evil ſhe is daily doing, by conſtantly throwing a *little* caſual weight into the wrong ſcale, by mere inconſiderate and unguarded chat, ſhe would ſtart from her ſelf-complacent dream. If ſhe could conceive how much ſhe may be diminiſhing the good impreſſions of *young* men; and if ſhe could imagine how little amiable levity or irreligion makes her appear in the eyes of thoſe who are older and abler, (however looſe their own principles may be,) ſhe would correct herſelf in the firſt inſtance, from pure good nature; and in the ſecond, from worldly prudence and mere ſelf-love. But on how much higher principles would ſhe reſtrain herſelf, if ſhe habitually took into account the important doctrine of conſequences; and if ſhe reflected that the

leſſer

leſſer but more habitual corruptions make up by their number, what they may ſeem to come ſhort of by their weight: then perhaps ſhe would find that, among the higher claſs of women, *inconſideration* is adding more to the daily quantity of evil than almoſt all other cauſes put together.

There is an inſtrument of inconceivable force, when it is employed againſt the intereſts of Chriſtianity: it is not reaſoning, for that may be anſwered; it is not learning, for luckily the infidel is not ſeldom ignorant; it is not invective, for we leave ſo coarſe an engine to the hands of the vulgar; it is not evidence, for happily we have that on our ſide: it is RIDICULE, the moſt deadly weapon in the whole arſenal of impiety, and which becomes an almoſt unerring ſhaft when directed by a fair and faſhionable hand. No maxim has been more readily adopted, or is more intrinſically falſe, than that which the faſcinating eloquence of a noble ſceptic of

the laſt age contrived to render ſo popular, that "ridicule is the teſt of truth." It is no teſt of truth itſelf; but of their firmneſs who aſſert the cauſe of truth, it is indeed a ſevere teſt. This light, keen, miſſile weapon, the irreſolute, unconfirmed Chriſtian will find it harder to withſtand, than the whole heavy artillery of infidelity united.

A young man of the better ſort, having juſt entered upon the world, with a certain ſhare of good diſpoſitions and right feelings, not ignorant of the evidences, nor deſtitute of the principles of Chriſtianity; without parting with his reſpect for religion, he ſets out with the too natural wiſh of making himſelf a reputation, and of ſtanding well with the faſhionable part of the female world. He preſerves for a time a horror of vice, which makes it not difficult for him to reſiſt the groſſer corruptions of ſociety; he can as yet repel profaneneſs; nay, he can withſtand the banter of a club. He has ſenſe enough to

ſee through the miſerable fallacies of the new philoſophy, and ſpirit enough to expoſe its malignity. So far he does well, and you are ready to congratulate him on his ſecurity. You are miſtaken: the principles of the ardent, and hitherto promiſing adventurer are ſhaken, juſt in that very ſociety where, while he was looking for pleaſure, he doubted not of ſafety. In the company of certain women of good faſhion and no ill fame, he makes ſhipwreck of his religion. He ſees them treat with levity or deriſion ſubjects which he has been uſed to hear named with reſpect. He could confute an argument, he could unravel a ſophiſtry; but he cannot ſtand a laugh. A ſneer, not at the truth of religion, for that perhaps is by none of the party diſbelieved, but at its gravity, its unſeaſonableneſs, its dulneſs, puts all his reſolution to flight. He feels his miſtake, and ſtruggles to recover his credit; in order to which, he adopts the gay affectation of trying to ſeem worſe than he really

really is, he goes on to say things which he does not believe, and to deny things which he does believe, and all to efface the first impression, and to recover a reputation which he has committed to *their* hands on whose report he knows he shall stand or fall, in those circles in which he is ambitious to shine.

That cold compound of irony, irreligion, selfishness, and sneer, which make up what the French (from whom we borrow the thing as well as the word) so well express by the term *persiflage*, has of late years made an incredible progress in blasting the opening buds of piety in young persons of fashion. A cold pleasantry, a temporary cant word, the jargon of the day (for the "great vulgar" have their jargon) blights the first promise of seriousness. The ladies of *ton* have certain watch-words, which may be detected as indications of this spirit. The clergy are spoken of under the contemptuous appellation of *The Parsons*. Some indecorous

aſſociation is infallibly combined with every idea of religion. If a warm-hearted youth has ventured to name with enthuſiaſm ſome eminently pious character, his glowing ardour is extinguiſhed with a laugh; and a drawling declaration, that the perſon in queſtion is really a mighty *harmleſs* good creature, is uttered in a tone which leads the youth ſecretly to vow, that whatever elſe he may be, he will never be a good harmleſs creature.

Nor is ridicule more dangerous to true piety than to true taſte. An age which values itſelf on parody, burleſque, irony, and caricature, produces little that is ſublime, either in genius or in virtue; but they *amuſe*, and we live in an age which *muſt* be amuſed, though genius, feeling, truth, and principle, be the ſacrifice. Nothing chills the ardours of devotion like a frigid ſarcaſm; and, in the ſeaſon of youth, the mind ſhould be kept particularly clear of all light aſſociations. This is of ſo much importance, that I

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have known perſons who, having been early accuſtomed to certain ludicrous combinations, were never able to get their minds cleanſed from the impurities contracted by this habitual levity, even after a thorough reformation in their hearts and lives had taken place: their principles became reformed, but their imaginations were indelibly ſoiled. They could deſiſt from ſins which the ſtrictneſs of Chriſtianity would not allow them to commit, but they could not diſmiſs from their minds images which her purity forbade them to entertain.

There was a time when a variety of epithets was thought neceſſary to expreſs various kinds of excellence, and when the different qualities of the mind were diſtinguiſhed by appropriate and diſcriminating terms; when the words venerable, learned, ſagacious, profound, acute, pious, worthy, ingenious, valuable, elegant, agreeable, wiſe, or witty, were uſed as ſpecific marks of diſtinct characters. But the le-

giſlators of faſhion have of late years thought proper to compriſe all merit in one eſtabliſhed epithet, and it muſt be confeſſed to be a very deſirable one as far as it goes. This epithet is excluſively and indiſcriminately applied wherever commendation is intended. The word *pleaſant* now ſerves to combine and expreſs all moral and intellectual excellence. Every individual, from the graveſt profeſſors of the graveſt profeſſion, down to the trifler who is of no profeſſion at all, muſt earn the epithet of *pleaſant*, or muſt be contented to be nothing; and muſt be conſigned over to ridicule, under the vulgar and inexpreſſive cant word of a *bore*. This is the mortifying deſignation of many a reſpectable man, who, though of much worth and much ability, cannot perhaps clearly make out his letters patent to the title of *pleaſant*. For, according to this modern claſſification, there is no intermediate ſtate, but all are compriſed within the ample bounds of one or other of theſe two terms.

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We ought to be more on our guard againſt this ſpirit of ridicule, becauſe, whatever may be the character of the preſent day, its faults do not ſpring from the redundancies of great qualities, or the overflowings of extravagant virtues. It is well if more correct views of life, a more regular adminiſtration of laws, and a more ſettled ſtate of ſociety, have helped to reſtrain the exceſſes of the heroic ages, when love and war were conſidered as the great and ſole buſineſs of human life. Yet, if that period was marked by a romantic extravagance, and the preſent by an indolent ſelfiſhneſs, our ſuperiority is not ſo triumphantly deciſive, as, in the vanity of our hearts, we may be ready to imagine.

I do not wiſh to bring back the frantic reign of chivalry, nor to reinſtate women in that fantaſtic empire in which they then ſat enthroned in the hearts, or rather in the imaginations of men. Common ſenſe is an excellent material of univerſal

application, which the ſagacity of latter ages has ſeized upon, and rationally applied to the buſineſs of common life. But let us not forget, in the inſolence of acknowledged ſuperiority, that it was religion and chaſtity, operating on the romantic ſpirit of thoſe times, which eſtabliſhed the deſpotic ſway of woman; and though ſhe now no longer looks down on her adoring votaries, from the pedeſtal to which an abſurd idolatry had lifted her, yet let her remember that it is the ſame religion and the ſame chaſtity which once raiſed her to ſuch an elevation, that muſt ſtill furniſh the nobleſt energies of her character.

While we lawfully ridicule the abſurdities which we have abandoned, let us not plume ourſelves on that ſpirit of novelty which glories in the oppoſite extreme. If the manners of the period in queſtion were affected, and if the gallantry was unnatural, yet the tone of virtue was high; and let us remember that

that conſtancy, purity, and honour, are not ridiculous in themſelves, though they may unluckily be aſſociated with qualities which are ſo: and women of delicacy would do well to reflect, when deſcanting on thoſe exploded manners, how far it be decorous to deride with too broad a laugh, attachments which could ſubſiſt on remote gratifications; or groſsly to ridicule the taſte which led the admirer to ſacrifice pleaſure to reſpect, and inclination to honour; to ſneer at that purity which made ſelf-denial a proof of affection, and to call in queſtion the ſound underſtanding of him who preferred the fame of his miſtreſs to his own indulgence.

One cannot but be ſtruck with the wonderful contraſt exhibited to our view, when we contemplate the manners of the two periods in queſtion. In the former, all the flower of Europe ſmit with a delirious gallantry; all that was young, and noble, and brave, and great, with a fanatic frenzy and prepoſterous con-

tempt of danger, traverſed ſeas, and ſcaled mountains, and compaſſed a large portion of the globe, at the expence of eaſe, and fortune, and life, for the unprofitable project of reſcuing, by force of arms, from the hands of infidels, the ſepulchre of that Saviour, whom, *in the other period*, their poſterity would think it the height of fanaticiſm ſo much as to name in good company: whoſe altars they deſert, whoſe temples they neglect; and though in more than one country at leaſt they ſtill call themſelves by his name, yet too many, it is to be feared, contemn his precepts, ſtill more are aſhamed of his doctrines, and not a few reject his ſacrifice. Too many conſider Chriſtianity rather as a political than a religious diſtinction: too many claim the appellation of Chriſtians, in mere oppoſition to that Democracy with which they conceive infidelity to be aſſociated, rather than from an abhorrence of impiety for its own ſake; and dread irreligion as the ſuppoſed badge of a reprobated party,

more

more than on account of that moral corruption which is its inſeparable concomitant.

On the other hand, in an age when inverſion is the order of the day, the modern idea of improvement does not conſiſt in altering, but extirpating. We do not reform, but ſubvert. We do not correct old ſyſtems, but demoliſh them; fancying that when every thing ſhall be new it will be perfect. Not to have been wrong, but to have been at all, is the crime. Excellence is no longer conſidered as an experimental thing which is to grow gradually out of obſervation and practice, and to be improved by the accumulating additions brought by the wiſdom of ſucceſſive ages. *Our wiſdom* is not ſlowly brought by age and gradual growth to perfection, but is a goddeſs which ſtarts at once, full grown, mature, armed cap-à-pee, from the heads of our modern thunderers. Or rather, if I may change the alluſion, a perfect ſyſtem is *now* expected inevitably to ſpring at once, like the fabled bird of Arabia, from the aſhes of its parent; and, like that, can re-

ceive its birth no other way but by the deſtruction of its predeceſſor.

Inſtead of clearing away what is redundant, pruning what is cumberſome, ſupplying what is defective, and amending what is wrong, we adopt the indefinite rage for radical reform of Jack, who in altering Lord Peter's * coat, ſhewed his zeal by crying out, "Tear away, brother "Martin, for the love of heaven; never "mind, ſo you do but tear away."

This tearing ſyſtem has unqueſtionably rent away ſome valuable parts of that ſtrong, rich, native ſtuff, which formed the ancient texture of Britiſh manners. That we have gained much I am perſuaded; that we have loſt nothing I dare not therefore affirm. But though it fairly exhibit a mark of our improved judgment to ridicule the fantaſtic notions of love and honour in the heroic ages; let us not rejoice that that ſpirit of generoſity in ſentiment, and of ardour in piety, the

* Swift's "Tale of a Tub."

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exuberancies of which were then ſo inconvenient, are now ſunk as unreaſonably low. That revolution of manners which the unparalleled wit and genius of Don Quixote ſo happily effected, by abolishing extravagancies the moſt abſurd and pernicious, was ſo far imperfect, that ſome virtues which he never meant to expoſe, fell into diſrepute with the abſurdities which he did: and it is become the turn of the preſent taſte to attach in no ſmall degree that which is ridiculous to that which is ſerious and heroic. Some modern works of wit have aſſiſted in bringing piety and ſome of the nobleſt virtues into contempt, by ſtudiouſly aſſociating them with oddity, childiſh ſimplicity, and ignorance of the world; and unneceſſary pains have been taken to extinguiſh that zeal and ardour, which, however liable to exceſs and error, are yet the ſpring of whatever is great and excellent in the human character. The novel of Cervantes is incomparable; the Tartuffe of Moliere is unequalled; but true

true generoſity and true religion will never loſe any thing of their intrinſic value, becauſe knight-errantry and hypocriſy are legitimate objects for ſatire.

But to return from this too long digreſſion, to the ſubject of female influence. Thoſe who have not watched the united operation of vanity and feeling on a youthful mind, will not conceive how much leſs formidable the ridicule of all his own ſex will be to a very young man, than that of thoſe women to whom he has been taught to look up as the arbitreſſes of elegance. Such an one, I doubt not, might be able to work himſelf up, by the force of genuine Chriſtian principles, to ſuch a pitch of true heroiſm, as to refuſe a challenge, (and it requires more real courage to refuſe a challenge than to accept one,) who would yet be in danger of relapſing into the dreadful puſillanimity of the world, when he is told that no woman of faſhion will hereafter look on him but with contempt. While we have cleared away

away the rubbiſh of the Gothic ages, it were to be wiſhed we had not retained the moſt criminal of all their inſtitutions. While chivalry ſhould indicate a madman, while its leading object, the *ſingle combat*, ſhould deſignate a gentleman, has not yet been explained. Nay the original motive is loſt, while the ſinful practice is continued; for the fighter of the duel no longer *pretends* to be a glorious redreſſer of the wrongs of ſtrangers; no longer conſiders himſelf as piouſly appealing to heaven for the juſtice of his cauſe; but from the ſlaviſh fear of unmerited reproach, often ſelfiſhly hazards the happineſs of his neareſt connections, and always comes forth in direct defiance of an acknowledged command of the Almighty. Perhaps there are few occaſions in which female influence might be exerted to a higher purpoſe than in this, in which laws and conſcience have hitherto effected ſo little. But while the duelliſt (who perhaps becomes a duelliſt only becauſe he

was

was firſt a ſeducer) is welcomed with ſmiles; the more hardy youth, who, not becauſe he fears man but God, declines a challenge; who is reſolved to brave diſgrace rather than commit ſin, would be treated with cool contempt by thoſe very perſons to whoſe eſteem he might reaſonably look, as one of the rewards of his true and ſubſtantial fortitude.

How then is it to be reconciled with the deciſions of principle, that delicate women ſhould receive with complacency the ſucceſsful libertine, who has been detected by the wretched father or the injured huſband in a criminal commerce, the diſcovery of which has too juſtly baniſhed the unhappy partner of his crime from virtuous ſociety? Nay, if he happen to be very handſome, or very brave, or very faſhionable, is there not ſometimes a kind of diſhonourable competition for his favour? But, whether his popularity be derived from birth, or parts, or perſon, or (what is often a ſubſtitute for all) from his having made his

his way into *good company*, women of diſtinction ſully the ſanctity of virtue by the too viſible pleaſure they ſometimes expreſs at the attentions of ſuch a popular libertine, whoſe voluble ſmall-talk they admire, and whoſe ſprightly nothings they quote, and whom perhaps their very favour tends to prevent from becoming a better character, becauſe he finds himſelf more acceptable as he is.

May I be allowed to introduce a new part of my ſubject, by remarking that it is a matter of inconceivable importance, though not perhaps ſufficiently conſidered, when any popular work, not on a religious topic, but on any common ſubject, ſuch as politics, hiſtory, or ſcience, has happened to be written by an author of ſound Chriſtian principles? It may not have been neceſſary, nor prudently practicable, to have a ſingle page in the whole work profeſſedly religious; but ſtill, when the living principle informs the mind of the writer, it is almoſt impoſſible but that ſomething of its ſpirit will

diffuſe

diffuſe itſelf even into ſubjects with which it ſhould ſeem but remotely connected. It is at leaſt a comfort to the reader, to feel that honeſt confidence which reſults from knowing that he has put himſelf into ſafe hands; that he has committed himſelf to an author whoſe known principles are a pledge that his reader need not be driven to watch himſelf at every ſtep with anxious circumſpection; that he need not be looking on the right hand and on the left, as if he knew there were pitfalls under the flowers which are delighting him. And it is no ſmall point gained, that on ſubjects in which you do not look to *improve* your religion, it is at leaſt ſecured from deterioration. If the Athenian laws were ſo delicate that they diſgraced any one who ſhewed an inquiring traveller the wrong road, what diſgrace, among Chriſtians, ſhould attach to that author, who, when a youth is inquiring the road to hiſtory or philoſophy, directs him to blaſphemy and unbelief?

In animadverting farther on the reigning evils which the times more particularly demand that women of rank and influence ſhould repreſs, Chriſtianity calls upon them to bear their decided teſtimony againſt every thing which is notoriouſly contributing to the public corruption. It calls upon them to baniſh from their dreſſing-rooms, (and oh, that their influence could baniſh from the libraries of their ſons and huſbands!) that ſober and unſuſpected maſs of miſchief, which, by aſſuming the plauſible names of Science, of Philoſophy, of Arts, of Belles Lettres, is gradually adminiſtering death to the principles of thoſe who would be on their guard, had the poiſon been labelled with its own pernicious title. Avowed attacks upon revelation are more eaſily reſiſted, becauſe the malignity is advertiſed. But who ſuſpects the deſtruction which lurks under the harmleſs or inſtructive names of *General Hiſtory, Natural Hiſtory, Travels, Voyages, Lives, Encyclopedias, Criticiſm, and Romance?*

name? Who will deny that many of these works contain much admirable matter, brilliant paſſages, important facts, juſt deſcriptions, faithful pictures of nature, and valuable illuſtrations of ſcience? But while "the dead fly lies at the bottom," the whole will exhale a corrupt and peſtilential ſtench.

Novels, which chiefly uſed to be dangerous in one reſpect, are now become miſchievous in a thouſand. They are continually ſhifting their ground, and enlarging their ſphere, and are daily becoming vehicles of wider miſchief. Sometimes they concentrate their forces, and are at once employed to diffuſe deſtructive politics, deplorable profligacy, and impudent infidelity. Rouſſeau was the firſt popular diſpenſer of this complicated drug, in which the deleterious infuſion was ſtrong, and the effect proportionably fatal. For he does not attempt to ſeduce the affections but through the medium of the principles. He does not paint an innocent

woman, ruined, repenting, and reſtored; but with a far more miſchievous refinement, he annihilates the value of chaſtity, and with pernicious ſubtlety attempts to make his heroine appear almoſt more amiable without it. He exhibits a virtuous woman, the victim not of temptation but of reaſon, not of vice but of ſentiment, not of paſſion but of conviction; and ſtrikes at the very root of honour by elevating a crime into a principle. With a metaphyſical ſophiſtry the moſt plauſible, he debauches the heart of woman, by ſhe-tiſhing her vanity in the erection of a ſyſtem of male virtues, to which, with a lofty dereliction of thoſe that are her more peculiar and characteriſtic praiſe, he tempts her to aſpire; powerfully inſinuating, that to this ſplendid ſyſtem chaſtity does not neceſſarily belong: thus corrupting the judgment and bewildering the underſtanding, as the moſt effectual way to inflame the imagination and deprave the heart.

The rare miſchief of this author conſiſts in his power of ſeducing by falſehood thoſe who love truth, but whoſe minds are ſtill wavering, and whoſe principles are not yet formed. He allures the warm-hearted to embrace vice, not becauſe they prefer vice, but becauſe he gives to vice ſo natural an air of virtue: and ardent and enthuſiaſtic youth, too confidently truſting in their integrity and in their teacher, will be undone, while they fancy they are indulging in the nobleſt feelings of their nature. Many authors will more infallibly complete the ruin of the looſe and ill-diſpoſed; but perhaps (if I may change the figure) there never was a net of ſuch exquiſite art and inextricable workmanſhip, ſpread to entangle innocence and enſnare inexperience, as the writings of Rouſſeau: and, unhappily, the victim does not even ſtruggle in the toils, becauſe part of the deluſion conſiſts in imagining that he is ſet at liberty.

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Some of our recent popular publications have adopted and enlarged all the miſchiefs of this ſchool, and the principal evil ariſing from them is, that the virtues they exhibit are almoſt more dangerous than the vices. The chief materials out of which theſe deluſive ſyſtems are framed, are characters who practiſe ſuperfluous acts of generoſity, while they are trampling on obvious and commanded duties; who combine inflated ſentiments of honour with actions the moſt flagitious; a high tone of ſelf-confidence, with a perpetual neglect of ſelf-denial: pathetic apoſtrophes to the paſſions, but no attempt to reſiſt them. They teach, that chaſtity is only individual attachment; that no duty exiſts which is not prompted by feeling; that impulſe is the main ſpring of virtuous actions, while laws and religion are only unjuſt reſtraints; the former impoſed by arbitrary men, the latter by the abſurd prejudices of timorous and unenlightened conſcience. Alas! they do not know that the beſt creature of impulſe

that ever lived is but a wayward, unfixed, unprincipled being! that the beſt *natural* man requires a curb; and needs that balance to the affections which Chriſtianity alone can furniſh, and without which benevolent propenſities are no ſecurity to virtue. And perhaps it is not too much to ſay, in ſpite of the monopoly of benevolence to which the new philoſophy lays claim, that the *human* duties of the ſecond table have never once been well performed by any of the rejectors of that previous portion of the Decalogue which enjoins duty to *God*.

In ſome of the moſt ſplendid of theſe characters compaſſion is erected into the throne of juſtice, and juſtice degraded into the rank of plebeian virtues. Creditors are defrauded, while the money due to them is laviſhed in dazzling acts of charity to ſome object that affects the ſenſes; which fits of charity are made the ſponge of every ſin, and the ſubſtitute of every virtue: the whole indirectly tending to intimate how very *benevolent people are who*

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are not Chriſtians. From many of theſe compoſitions, indeed, Chriſtianity is ſyſtematically, and always virtually, excluded; for the law, and the prophets, and the goſpel, *can* make no part of a ſcheme in which this world is looked upon as all in all; in which want and miſery are conſidered as evils ariſing ſolely from human governments, and not from the diſpenſations of God; in which poverty is repreſented as merely a political evil, and the reſtraints which tend to keep the poor honeſt, are painted as the moſt flagrant injuſtice, The goſpel *can* make no part of a ſyſtem in which the chimerical project of conſummate earthly happineſs (founded on the mad pretence of loving the poor better than God loves them) would defeat the divine plan, which meant this world a ſcene of diſcipline, not of remuneration. The goſpel *can* have nothing to do with a ſyſtem in which ſin is reduced to a little human imperfection, and Old Bailey crimes are ſoftened down into a few engaging

weakneſſes; and in which the turpitude of all the vices a man himſelf commits, is done away by his *candour* in tolerating all the vices commited by others.

But the part of the ſyſtem the moſt fatal to that claſs whom I am addreſſing is, that even in thoſe works which do not go all the length of treating marriage as an unjuſt infringement on liberty, and a tyrannical deduction from general happineſs; yet it commonly happens that the hero or heroine, who has practically violated the letter of the ſeventh commandment, and continues to live in the allowed violation of its ſpirit, is painted as ſo amiable and ſo benevolent, ſo tender or ſo brave; and the temptation is repreſented as ſo *irreſiſtible*, (for all theſe philoſophers are fataliſts,) the predominant and cheriſhed ſin is ſo filtered and defecated of its pollutions, and is ſo ſheltered and ſurrounded, and relieved with ſhining qualities, that the innocent and impreſſible young reader is brought to loſe all horror of the awful

awful crime in queſtion, in the complacency ſhe feels for the engaging virtues of the criminal.

But there is another object to which I would direct the exertion of that power of female influence of which I am ſpeaking. Thoſe ladies who take the lead in ſociety are loudly called upon to act as the guardians of the public taſte as well as of the public virtue. They are called upon, therefore, to oppoſe with the whole weight of their influence, the irruption of thoſe ſwarms of publications now daily iſſuing from the banks of the Danube, which, like their ravaging predeceſſors of the darker ages, though with far other arms, are overrunning civilized ſociety. Thoſe readers, whoſe purer taſte has been formed on the correct models of the old claſſic ſchool, ſee with indignation and aſtoniſhment the Huns and Vandals once more overpowering the Greeks and Romans. They behold our minds, with a retrograde but rapid motion, hurried

back to the reign of "chaos and old night," by distorted and unprincipled compositions, which unite the taste of the Goths with the morals of Bagshot *,

"Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire!"

They terrify the weak, and disgust the discerning, by wild and mis-shapen superstitions, in which, with that *consistency* which forms so striking a feature of the new philosophy, those who most earnestly deny the immortality of the soul are most eager to introduce the machinery of ghosts.

The writings of the French infidels were some years ago circulated in England with uncommon industry and with some effect: but the plain sense and good principles of the far greater part of our countrymen resisted the attack, and rose superior to the trial. Of the doctrines and principles here alluded to, the dreadful consequences, not only

* The newspapers announce that Schiller's Tragedy of the Robbers, which inflamed the young nobility of Germany to inlist themselves into a band of highwaymen to rob in the forests of Bohemia, is *now acting in England by persons of quality!*

only in the unhappy country where they originated and were almoſt univerſally adopted, but in every part of Europe where they have been received, have been ſuch as to ſerve as a beacon to ſurrounding nations, if any warning can preſerve them from deſtruction. In this country the ſubject is now ſo well underſtood, that every thing that iſſues from the *French* preſs is received with jealouſy; and a work on the firſt appearance of its exhibiting the doctrines of Voltaire and his aſſociates is rejected with indignation.

But let us not on account of this victory repoſe in confident ſecurity. The modern apoſtles of infidelity and immorality, little leſs indefatigable in diſperſing their pernicious doctrines than the firſt apoſtles were in propagating goſpel truths, have indeed changed their weapons, but they have by no means deſiſted from the attack. To deſtroy the principles of Chriſtianity in this iſland, appears at the preſent moment to be their grand aim. Deprived of the aſſiſtance of the French

preſs,

preſs, they are now attempting to attain their object under the cloſe and more artificial veil of German literature. Conſcious that religion and morals will ſtand or fall together, their attacks are ſometimes levelled againſt the one, and ſometimes againſt the other. With ſtrong occaſional profeſſions of general attachment to both of theſe, they endeavour to intereſt the feelings of the reader, ſometimes in favour of ſome one particular vice, at other times on the ſubject of ſome one objection to revealed religion. Poetry as well as proſe, romance as well as hiſtory, writings on philoſophical as well as on political ſubjects, have thus been employed to inſtil the principles of *Illuminatiſm*, while incredible pains have been taken to obtain able tranſlations of every book which was ſuppoſed likely to be of uſe in corrupting the heart or miſleading the underſtanding. In many of theſe tranſlations, certain bolder paſſages, which, though well received in Germany, would have excited

cited diſguſt in England, are wholly omitted, in order that the mind may be more certainly, though more ſlowly, prepared for the full effect of the ſame poiſon to be adminiſtered in a ſtronger degree at another period.

Let not thoſe to whom theſe pages are addreſſed deceive themſelves by ſuppoſing this to be a fable; and let them inquire moſt ſeriouſly whether I ſpeak truth, in aſſerting that the attacks of infidelity in Great Britain are at this moment principally directed againſt the female breaſt. Conſcious of the influence of women in civil ſociety, conſcious of the effect which female infidelity produced in France, they attribute the ill ſucceſs of their attempts in this country, to their having been hitherto chiefly addreſſed to the male ſex. They are now ſeduloufly labouring to deſtroy the religious principles of women, and in too many inſtances have fatally ſucceeded. For this purpoſe, not only novels and romances have been

been made the vehicles of vice and infidelity, but the ſame allurement has been held out to the women of our country, which was employed by the firſt philoſophiſt to the firſt ſinner—Knowledge. Liſten to the precepts of the new German enlighteners, and you need no longer remain in that ſituation in which Providence has placed you! Follow their examples, and you ſhall be permitted to indulge in all thoſe gratifications which cuſtom, not religion, has tolerated in the male ſex!

Let us jealouſly watch every deepening ſhade in the change of manners; let us mark every ſtep, however inconſiderable, whoſe tendency is downwards. Corruption is neither ſtationary nor retrograde; and to have departed from modeſty, is already to have made a progreſs. It is not only awfully true, that ſince the new principles have been afloat, *women* have been too eagerly inquiſitive after theſe monſtrous compoſitions; but it is true alſo that, with a new and offenſive renunciation

of

of their native delicacy, *many women of character* make little hesitation in avowing their familiarity with works abounding with principles, sentiments, and descriptions, "which "should not be so much as named among "them." By allowing their minds to come in contact with such contagious matter, they are irrecoverably tainting them; and by acknowledging that they are actually conversant with such corruptions, (with whatever reprobation of the author they may qualify their perusal of the book,) they are exciting in others a most mischievous curiosity for the same unhallowed gratification. Thus they are daily diminishing in the young and the timid those wholesome scruples, by which, when a tender conscience ceases to be intrenched, all the subsequent stages of ruin are gradually facilitated.

We have hitherto spoken only of the German *writings*; but because there are multitudes who seldom read, equal pains have been taken to promote the same object through

through the medium of the ſtage: and this weapon is, of all others, that againſt which it is, at the preſent moment, the moſt important to warn the more inconſiderate of my countrywomen.

As a ſpecimen of the German drama, it may not be unſeaſonable to offer a few remarks on the admired play of the *Stranger*. In this piece the character of an *adultreſs*, which, in all periods of the world, ancient as well as modern, in all countries, heathen as well as chriſtian, has hitherto been held in deteſtation, and has never been introduced but to be reprobated, is for the firſt time preſented to our view in the moſt pleaſing and faſcinating colours. The heroine is a woman who forſook a huſband the moſt affectionate and the moſt amiable, and lived for ſome time in the moſt criminal commerce with her ſeducer. Repenting at length of her crime, ſhe buries herſelf in retirement. The talents of the poet during the whole piece are exerted in attempting to render this

this woman the object not only of the compaſſion and forgiveneſs, but of the eſteem and affection of the audience. The injured huſband, convinced of his wife's repentance, forms a reſolution, which every man of true feeling and chriſtian piety will probably approve. He forgives her offence, and promiſes her through life his advice, protection, and fortune, together with every thing which can alleviate the miſery of her ſituation, but refuſes to replace her in the ſituation of his wife. But this is not ſufficient for the *German* author. His efforts are employed, and it is to be feared but too ſucceſsfully, in making the audience conſider the huſband as an unrelenting ſavage, while they are led by the art of the poet anxiouſly to wiſh to ſee an adultreſs reſtored to that rank of women who have not violated the moſt ſolemn covenant that can be made with man, nor diſobeyed one of the moſt poſitive laws which has been enjoined by God.

About

About the ſame time that this firſt attempt at repreſenting an acultreſs in an exemplary light was made by a German dramatiſt, which forms an æra in manners; a direct vindication of adultery was for the firſt time attempted by a *woman*, a profeſſed admirer and imitator of the German ſuicide Werter. *The Female Werter*, as ſhe is ſtyled by her biographer, aſſerts, in a work intitled "The Wrongs of Women," that adultery is juſtifiable, and that the reſtrictions placed on it by the laws of England conſtitute one of the *Wrongs of Women*.

And this leads me to dwell a little longer on this moſt deſtructive claſs in the whole wide range of modern corruptors, who effect the moſt deſperate work of the paſſions, without ſo much as pretending to urge their violence in extenuation of the guilt of indulging them. They ſolicit this very indulgence with a ſort of cold-blooded ſpeculation, and invite the

reader to the most unbounded gratifications, with all the saturnine coolness of a geometrical calculation. Theirs is an iniquity rather of phlegm than of spirit; and in the pestilent atmosphere they raise about them, as in the infernal climate described by Milton,

"The parching air
Burns frore, and frost performs th' effect of fire."

This cool, calculating, intellectual wickedness eats out the very heart and core of virtue, and like a deadly mildew blights and shrivels the blooming promises of the human spring. Its benumbing touch communicates a torpid sluggishness which paralyses the soul. It defrauds on depravity as gravely, and details its grossest acts as frigidly, as if its object were to *allay* the tumult of the passions, while it is letting them loose on mankind, by plucking off the "muzzles" of present restraint and future

* "When the north-wind bloweth it devoureth the "mountains, and burneth the wilderness, and consum-"eth the grass as fire." Eccluf. xl. 20.

accountableness. The system is a dire infusion, compounded of bold impiety, brutish sensuality, and exquisite folly, which creeping fatally about the heart, checks the moral circulation, and totally stops the pulse of goodness by the extinction of the vital principle. Thus not only choaking the stream of actual virtue, but drying up the very fountain of future remorse and remote repentance.

The ravages which some of the old offenders against purity made in the youthful heart, by the exercise of a fervid but licentious imagination on the passions, was like the mischief effected by floods, cataracts, and volcanos. The desolation indeed was terrible, and the ruin was tremendous: yet it was a ruin which did not *infallibly* preclude the possibility of recovery. The country, though deluged and devastated, was not utterly put beyond the power of restoration. The harvests indeed were destroyed, and all was wide sterility. But, though the crops were lost, the *seeds*

of

of vegetation were not absolutely eradicated; so that, after a long and barren blank, fertility *might* finally return.

But the heart once infected with this newly medicated venom, *lucid* though sluggish in its operation, resembles what travellers relate of that blasted spot the dead sea, where those devoted cities once stood which for their pollutions were burnt with fire from heaven. It continues a stagnant lake of putrifying waters. No wholesome blade evermore shoots up; the air is so tainted that no living thing subsists within its influence. Near the sulphureous pool the very principle of life is annihilated.—All is death.

Death, unrepealable, eternal death!

But let us take comfort. These projects are not yet generally realised. These atrocious principles are not yet adopted into common practice. Though corruptions seem with a confluent tide to be pouring in upon us from every quarter, yet there is still left among us a discriminating judg-

ment. Clear and ſtrongly marked diſtinctions between right and wrong ſtill ſubſiſt. While we continue to cheriſh this ſanity of mind, the caſe is not deſperate. Though that crime, the growth of which always exhibits the moſt irrefragable proof of the diſſoluteneſs of public manners; though that crime, which cuts up order and virtue by the roots, and violates the ſanctity of vows, is awfully increaſing,

'Till ſenates ſeem,
For purpoſes of empire leſs conven'd
Than to releaſe the adult'reſs from her bonds;

yet, thanks to the ſurviving efficacy of a holy religion, to the operation of virtuous laws, and to the energy and unſhaken integrity with which theſe laws are *now* adminiſtered; and, moſt of all perhaps, to a ſtandard of morals which continues in force, when the principles which ſanctioned it are no more; this crime, in the female ſex at leaſt, is ſtill held in juſt abhorrence; if it be practiſed, it is not honourable; if it be committed, it

is not juſtified; we do not yet affect to palliate its turpitude; as yet it hides its abhorred head in lurking privacy; and reprobation *hitherto* follows its publicity.

But on YOUR exerting your influence, with juſt application and increaſing energy, may in no ſmall degree depend whether this corruption ſhall ſtill continue to be reſiſted. For, from admiring to adopting, the ſtep is ſhort, and the progreſs rapid; and it is in the moral as in the natural world; the motion, in the caſe of minds as well as of bodies, is accelerated as they approach the centre to which they are tending.

O ye to whom this addreſs is particularly directed! an awful charge is, in this inſtance committed to your hands; as you diſcharge it or ſhrink from it, you promote or injure the honour of your daughters and the happineſs of your ſons, of both which you are the depoſitaries. And, while you reſolutely perſevere in making a ſtand againſt the

encroachments of this crime, ſuffer not your firmneſs to be ſhaken by that affectation of charity, which is growing into a general ſubſtitute for principle. Abuſe not ſo noble a quality as Chriſtian candour, by miſemploying it in inſtances to which it does not apply. Pity the wretched woman you dare not countenance; and bleſs HIM who has "made "you to differ." If unhappily ſhe be your relation or friend, anxiouſly watch for the period when ſhe ſhall be deſerted by her betrayer; and ſee if, by your Chriſtian offices, ſhe can be ſnatched from a perpetuity of vice. But if, through the Divine bleſſing on your patient endeavours, ſhe ſhould ever be awakened to remorſe, be not anxious to reſtore the forlorn penitent to that ſociety againſt whoſe laws ſhe has ſo grievouſly offended; and remember, that her ſoliciting ſuch a reſtoration, furniſhes but too plain a proof that ſhe is not the penitent your partiality would believe; ſince penitence is more anxious

to

to make its peace with Heaven than with the world. Joyfully would a truly contrite ſpirit commute an earthly for an everlaſting reprobation! To reſtore a criminal to public ſociety, is perhaps to tempt her to repeat her crime, or to deaden her repentance for having committed it, as well as to injure that ſociety; while to reſtore a ſtrayed ſoul to God will add luſtre to your Chriſtian character, and brighten your eternal crown.

In the mean time, there are other evils, ultimately perhaps tending to this, into which we are falling, through that ſort of faſhionable candour which, as was hinted above, is among the miſchievous characteriſtics of the preſent day; of which period perhaps it is not the ſmalleſt evil, that vices are made to look ſo like virtues, and are ſo aſſimilated to them, that it requires watchfulneſs and judgment ſufficiently to analyze and diſcriminate. There are certain women of good faſhion who practiſe irregularities not conſiſtent with the ſtrictneſs of virtue;

while their good ſenſe and knowledge of the world make them at the ſame time keenly alive to the value of reputation. They want to retain their indulgences, without quite forfeiting their credit; but finding their fame faſt declining, they artfully cling, by flattery and marked attentions, to a few perſons of more than ordinary character; and thus, till they are driven to let go their hold, continue to prop a falling fame.

On the other hand, there are not wanting women of diſtinction, of very correct general conduct, and of no ordinary ſenſe and virtue, who, confiding with a high mind on what they too confidently call *the integrity of their own hearts*; anxious to deſerve a good fame on the one hand, by a life free from reproach, yet ſecretly too deſirous on the other of ſecuring a worldly and faſhionable reputation; while their general aſſociates are perſons of honour, and their general reſort places of ſafety; yet allow themſelves

ſelves to be occaſionally preſent at the midnight orgies of revelry and gaming, in houſes of no honourable eſtimation; and thus help to keep up characters, which, without their ſuſtaining hand, would ſink to their juſt level of contempt and reprobation. While they are holding out this plank to a drowning reputation, rather, it is to be feared, ſhewing their own ſtrength than aſſiſting another's weakneſs, they value themſelves, perhaps, on not partaking of the worſt parts of the amuſements which may be carrying on; but they ſanction them by their preſence; they lend their countenance to corruptions they ſhould abhor, and their example to the young and inexperienced, who are looking about for ſome ſuch ſanction to juſtify them in that to which they were before inclined, but were too timid to have ventured upon without the protection of ſuch unſullied names. Thus theſe reſpectable characters, without looking to the general conſe-

quences

quences of their indiscretion, are thoughtlessly employed in breaking down, as it were, the bread fence which should ever separate two very different sorts of society, and are becoming a kind of unnatural link between vice and virtue.

There is a gross deception which even persons of reputation practise on themselves. They loudly condemn vice and irregularity as an abstract principle; nay, they stigmatize them in persons of an opposite party, or in those from whom they themselves have no prospect of personal advantage or amusement, and in whom therefore they have no particular interest to tolerate evil. But the same disorders are viewed without abhorrence when practised by those who in any way minister to *their* pleasures. Refined entertainments, luxurious decorations, select music, whatever furnishes any delight rare and exquisite to the senses, these soften the severity of criticism; these palliate sins, varnish over the flaws of a broken character, and

extort

extort not pardon merely, but justification, countenance, intimacy! The more respectable will not, perhaps, go all the length of vindicating the disreputable vice, but they affect to disbelieve its existence in the individual instance; or, failing in this, they will bury its acknowledged turpitude in the seducing qualities of the agreeable delinquent. Talents of every kind are considered as a commutation for a few vices, and such are made a passport to introduce into honourable society characters whom their profligacy ought to exclude from it.

But the great object to which you who are, or may be mothers, are more especially called, is the education of your children. If we are responsible for the use of influence in the case of those over whom we have no immediate control, in the case of our children we are responsible for the exercise of acknowledged *power*: a power wide in its extent, indefinite in its effect, and inestimable in its importance.

On

On you, depend in no ſmall degree the principles of the whole riſing generation. To your direction the daughters are almoſt excluſively committed; and until a certain age, to you alſo is conſigned the mighty privilege of forming the hearts and minds of your infant ſons. By the bleſſing of God on the principles you ſhall, as far as it depends on you, infuſe into both ſons and daughters, they will hereafter "ariſe and call you bleſſed." And in the great day of general account, may every Chriſtian mother be enabled through divine grace to ſay, with humble confidence, to her Maker and Redeemer, "Behold the children whom thou haſt "given me!"

Chriſtianity, driven out from the reſt of the world, has ſtill, bleſſed be God! a "ſtrong hold" in this country. And though it be the ſpecial duty of the appointed "watchman, *now* that he ſeeth "the ſword come upon the land, to "blow the trumpet and warn the people,

"which

"which if he neglect to do, their blood "shall be required of the watchman's "hand *:" yet, in this sacred garrison, *impregnable but by neglect*, you too have an awful post, that of arming the minds of the rising generation with the "shield of faith, whereby they shall be "able to quench the fiery darts of the "wicked;" that of girding them with "that sword of the Spirit which is the "word of God." If you neglect this your bounden duty, you will have effectually contributed to expel Christianity from her last citadel. And, remember, that the dignity of the work to which you are called, is no less than that of preserving the ark of the Lord.

* Ezekiel, xxxiii. 6.

CHAP. II.

On the education of women.—The prevailing ſyſtem tends to eſtabliſh the errors which it ought to correct.—Dangers ariſing from an exceſſive cultivation of the arts.

IT is far from being the object of this ſlight work to offer a regular plan of female education, a taſk which has been often more properly aſſumed by far abler writers; but it is intended rather to ſuggeſt a few remarks on the reigning mode, which, though it has had many panegyriſts, appears to be defective, not only in a few particulars, but as a general ſyſtem. There are indeed numberleſs honourable exceptions to an obſervation which will be thought ſevere; yet the author queſtions if it be not the natural and direct tendency of the prevailing and popular ſyſtem, to excite and promote thoſe very defects

which it ought to be the main end and object of Christian education to remove; whether, instead of directing this important engine to attack and destroy *vanity, selfishness, and inconsideration*, that triple alliance in strict and constant league against female virtue; the combined powers of instruction are not sedulously confederated in confirming their strength and establishing their empire?

If indeed the *material* substance, if the body and limbs, with the organs and senses, be really the more valuable objects of attention, then there is little room for animadversion and improvement. But if the immaterial and immortal mind; if the heart, "out of which are the issues of life," be the main concern; if the great business of education be to implant ideas, to communicate knowledge, to form a correct taste and a sound judgment, to resist evil propensities, and, above all, to seize the favourable season for infusing principles and confirming habits; if education

be

be a ſchool to fit us for life, and life be a ſchool to fit us for eternity; if ſuch, I repeat it, be the chief work and grand ends of education, it may then be worth inquiring how far theſe ends are likely to be effected by the prevailing ſyſtem.

Is it not a fundamental error to conſider children as innocent beings, whoſe little weakneſſes may perhaps want ſome correction, rather than as beings who bring into the world a corrupt nature and evil diſpoſitions, which it ſhould be the great end of education to rectify? This appears to be ſuch a foundation-truth, that if I were aſked what quality is moſt important in an inſtructor of youth, I ſhould not heſitate to reply, *ſuch a ſtrong impreſſion of the corruption of our nature, as ſhould inſure a diſpoſition to counteract it; together with ſuch a deep view and thorough knowledge of the human heart, as ſhould be neceſſary for developing and controlling its moſt ſecret and complicated workings.* And let us remember that to *know the world*, as

as it is called, that is, to know its local manners, temporary uſages, and evaneſcent faſhions, is not to *know human nature*: and that where this prime knowledge is wanting, thoſe natural evils which ought to be counteracted will be foſtered.

Vanity, for inſtance, is reckoned among the light and venial errors of youth; nay, ſo far from being treated as a dangerous enemy, it is often called in as an auxiliary. At worſt, it is conſidered as a harmleſs weakneſs, which ſubtracts little from the value of a character; as a natural effervescence, which will ſubſide of itſelf, when the firſt ferment of the youthful paſſions ſhall have done working. But thoſe know little of the conformation of the human, and eſpecially of the female heart, who fancy that vanity is ever exhauſted, by the mere operation of time and events. Let thoſe who maintain this opinion look into our places of public reſort, and there behold if the ghoſt of departed beauty is not to its laſt flitting fond of haunting the

ſcenes of its paſt pleaſures; the ſoul, unwilling (if I may borrow an alluſion from the Platonic mythology) to quit the ſpot in which the body enjoyed its former delights, ſtill continues to hover about the ſame place, though the ſame pleaſures are no longer to be found there. Diſappointments indeed may divert vanity into a new direction; prudence may prevent it from breaking out into exceſſes, and age may prove that it is "vexation of ſpirit;" but neither diſappointment, prudence, nor age can *cure* it; for they do not correct the principle. Nay, the very diſappointment itſelf ſerves as a painful evidence of its protracted exiſtence.

Since then there is a ſeaſon when the youthful muſt ceaſe to be young, and the beautiful to excite admiration; to learn how to grow old gracefully is perhaps one of the rareſt and moſt valuable arts which can be taught to woman. It is for this ſober ſeaſon of life that education ſhould lay up its rich reſources. However diſregarded they

may

may hitherto have been, they will be wanted now. When admirers fall away, and flatterers become mute, the mind will be driven to retire into itſelf, and if it find no entertainment at home, it will be driven back again upon the world with increaſed force. Yet forgetting this, do we not ſeem to educate our daughters, excluſively, for the tranſient period of youth, when it is to maturer life we ought to advert? Do we not educate them for a crowd, forgetting that they are to live at home? for the world, and not for themſelves? for ſhow, and not for uſe? for time, and not for eternity?

Vanity (and the ſame may be ſaid of ſelfiſhneſs) is not to be reſiſted like any other vice, which is ſometimes buſy and ſometimes quiet; it is not to be attacked as a ſingle fault, which is indulged in oppoſition to a ſingle virtue; but it is uniformly to be controlled, as an active, a reſtleſs, a growing principle, at conſtant war with all the Chriſtian graces; which

not only mixes itſelf with all our faults, but inſinuates itſelf into all our virtues too; and will, if not checked effectually, rob our beſt actions of their reward. Vanity, if I may uſe the analogy, is, with reſpect to the other vices, what feeling is in regard to the other ſenſes; it is not confined in its operation to the eye, or the ear, or any ſingle organ, but diffuſed through the whole being, alive in every part, awakened and communicated by the ſlighteſt touch.

Not a few of the evils of the preſent day ariſe from a new and perverted application of terms; among theſe, perhaps, there is not one more abſurd, miſunderſtood, or miſapplied, than the term *accompliſhments*. This word in its original meaning ſignifies *completeneſs*, *perfection*. But I may ſafely appeal to the obſervation of mankind, whether they do not meet with ſwarms of youthful females, iſſuing from our boarding ſchools, as well as emerging from the more private ſcenes of domeſtic education, who

who are introduced into the world, under the broad and univerſal title of *accompliſhed young ladies*, of *all* of whom it cannot very truly and correctly be pronounced, that they illuſtrate the definition by a completeneſs which leaves nothing to be added, and a perfection which leaves nothing to be deſired.

This phrenzy of accompliſhments, unhappily, is no longer reſtricted within the uſual limits of rank and fortune; the middle orders have caught the contagion, and it rages downward with increaſing and deſtructive violence, from the elegantly dreſſed but ſlenderly portioned curate's daughter, to the equally faſhionable daughter of the little tradeſman, and of the more opulent but not more judicious farmer. And is it not obvious, that as far as this epidemical mania has ſpread, this very valuable part of ſociety is declining in uſefulneſs, as it riſes in its unlucky pretenſions to elegance? till this rapid revolution of the manners of the middle claſs has ſo far

altered the character of the age, as to be in danger of rendering obſolete the heretofore common ſaying, "that moſt worth and "virtue are to be found in the middle ſta-"tion." For I do not ſcruple to aſſert, that in general, as far as my litttle obſervation has extended, this claſs of females, in what relates both to religious knowledge and to practical induſtry, falls ſhort both of the very high and the very low. Their new courſe of education, and the habits of life and elegance of dreſs connected with it, peculiarly unfit them for the active duties of their own very important condition; while, with frivolous eagerneſs, and ſecond-hand opportunities, they run to ſnatch a few of thoſe ſhowy acquirements which decorate the great. This is done apparently with one or other of theſe views; either to make their fortune by marriage, or if that fail, to qualify them to become teachers of others: hence the abundant multiplication of ſuperficial wives, and of incompetent and illiterate governeſſes.

The

The uſe of the pencil, the performance of exquiſite but unneceſſary works, the ſtudy of foreign languages and of muſic, require (with ſome exceptions which ſhould always be made in favour of great natural genius) a degree of leiſure which belongs excluſively to affluence*. One uſe of learning languages is, not that we may know what the terms which expreſs the articles of our dreſs and our table are called in French or Italian; not that we may think over a few ordinary phraſes in Engliſh, and then tranſlate them, without one foreign idiom; for he who cannot *think* in a language cannot be ſaid to underſtand it: but the great uſe of acquiring any foreign language is, either that it enables us occaſionally to converſe with foreigners, unacquainted with any other, or that it is a key to the literature of the country to which it

* Thoſe among the claſs in queſtion, whoſe own good ſenſe leads them to avoid theſe miſtaken purſuits, cannot be offended at a reproof which does not belong to them.

belongs; and thoſe humbler females, the chief part of whoſe time is required for domeſtic offices, are little likely to fall in the way of foreigners; and ſo far from enjoying opportunities for the acquiſition of foreign literature, they have ſeldom time to poſſeſs themſelves of all that valuable knowledge which the books of their own country ſo abundantly furniſh; and the acquiſition of which would be ſo much more uſeful and honourable than the paltry acceſſions they make, by hammering out the meaning of a few paſſages in a tongue they but imperfectly underſtand, and of which they are likely to make no uſe.

It would be well if the reflection how eagerly this redundancy of accompliſhments is ſeized on by their inferiors, were to operate as in the caſe of other abſurd faſhions; the rich and great being ſeldom brought to renounce any mode or cuſtom, from the mere conſideration that it is prepoſterous, or that it is wrong; while they are frightened into its immediate relinquiſh-

ment,

ment, from the preſſing conſideration that the *vulgar* are beginning to adopt it.

But, to return to that more elevated, and, on account of their more extended influence only, that more important claſs of females, to whoſe uſe this little work is more immediately dedicated. Some popular authors, on the ſubject of female inſtruction, had for a time eſtabliſhed a fantaſtic code of artificial manners. They had refined elegance into inſipidity, frittered down delicacy into frivoloufneſs, and reduced manner into *minauderie*. But "to liſp, and to amble, and to nick-name "God's creatures," has nothing to do with true gentleneſs of mind; and to be ſilly makes no neceſſary part of ſoftneſs. Another claſs of cotemporary authors turned all the force of their talents to excite *emotions*, to inſpire *ſentiment*, and to reduce all mental and moral excellence into *ſympathy* and *feeling*. Theſe ſofter qualities were elevated at the expence of principle; and young women were inceſſantly hearing

unqualified

unqualified ſenſibility extolled as the perfection of their nature; till thoſe who really poſſeſſed this amiable quality, inſtead of directing, and chaſtiſing, and reſtraining it, were in danger of foſtering it to their hurt, and began to conſider themſelves as deriving their excellence from its exceſs; while thoſe leſs intereſting damſels, who happened not to find any of this amiable ſenſibility in their *hearts*, but thought it creditable to have it ſomewhere, fancied its ſeat was in the *nerves*; and here indeed it was eaſily found or feigned; till a falſe and exceſſive diſplay of feeling became ſo predominant, as to bring in queſtion the actual exiſtence of that true tenderneſs, without which, though a woman may be worthy, ſhe can never be amiable.

Faſhion then, by one of her ſudden and rapid turns, inſtantaneouſly ſtruck out both real ſenſibility and the affectation of it from the ſtanding liſt of female perfections; and, by a quick touch of her magic wand, ſhifted

ſhifted the ſcene, and at once produced the bold and independent beauty, the intrepid female, the hoyden, the huntreſs, and the archer; the ſwinging arms, the confident addreſs, the regimental, and the four in hand. Such ſelf-complacent heroines made us ready to regret their ſofter predeceſſors, who had aimed only at pleaſing the other ſex, while theſe aſpiring fair ones ſtruggled for the bolder renown of rivalling them; the project failed; for, whereas the former had ſued for admiration, the latter challenged, ſeized, compelled it; but the men, as was natural, continued to prefer the more modeſt claimant to the ſturdy competitor.

It were well if we, who have the advantage of contemplating the errors of the two extremes, were to look for truth where ſhe is commonly to be found, in the plain and obvious middle path, equally remote from each exceſs; and, while we bear in mind that helpleſneſs is not delicacy, let us alſo remember that maſculine manners do not neceſſarily include ſtrength of

character

character nor vigour of intellect. Should we not reflect alſo, that we are neither to train up Amazons nor Circaſſians, but that it is our buſineſs to form Chriſtians? that we have to educate not only rational, but accountable beings? and, remembering this, ſhould we not be ſolicitous to let our daughters learn of the well-taught, and aſſociate with the well-bred? In training them, ſhould we not carefully cultivate intellect, implant religion, and cheriſh modeſty? Then, whatever is engaging in manners would be the natural reſult of whatever is juſt in ſentiment, and correct in principle; ſoftneſs would grow out of humility, and external delicacy would ſpring from purity of heart: then the decorums, the proprieties, the elegancies, and even the graces, as far as they are ſimple, pure, and honeſt, would follow as an almoſt inevitable conſequence; for to follow in the train of the Chriſtian virtues, and not to take the lead of them, is the proper place which religion aſſigns to the graces.

Whether

Whether we have made the beſt uſe of the errors of our predeceſſors, and of our own numberleſs advantages, and whether the prevailing ſyſtem be really conſiſtent with ſound policy, true taſte, or Chriſtian principle, it may be worth our while to inquire.

Would not a ſtranger be led to imagine by a view of the reigning mode of female education, that human life conſiſted of one univerſal holiday, and that the grand conteſt between the ſeveral competitors was, who ſhould be moſt eminently qualified to excel, and carry off the prize, in the various ſhows and games which were intended to be exhibited in it? And to the exhibitors themſelves, would he not be ready to apply Sir Francis Bacon's obſervation on the Olympian victors, that they were ſo excellent in theſe unneceſſary things, that their perfection muſt needs have been acquired by the neglect of whatever was neceſſary?

What would the poliſhed Addiſon, who thought that one great end of a lady's learning to dance was, that ſhe might know how to ſit ſtill gracefully; what would even the Pagan hiſtorian* of the great Roman conſpirator, who could commemorate it among the defects of his hero's *accompliſhed* miſtreſs, "that ſhe was "too good a ſinger and dancer for a "virtuous woman;"—what would theſe refined critics have ſaid, had they lived, as we have done, to ſee the art of dancing lifted into ſuch importance, that it cannot with any degree of ſafety be confided to one inſtructor, but a whole train of ſucceſſive maſters are conſidered as abſolutely eſſential to its perfection? What would theſe accurate judges of female manners have ſaid, to ſee a modeſt young lady firſt delivered into the hands of a military ſerjeant to inſtruct her in the *feminine* art of marching? and when this

* Salluſt.

delicate

delicate acquiſition is attained, to ſee her transferred to a profeſſor, who is to teach her the Scotch ſteps; which profeſſor, having communicated his indiſpenſable portion of this indiſpenſable art, makes way for the profeſſor of French dances; and all perhaps, in their turn, either yield to, or have the honour to co-operate with, a finiſhing maſter; each probably receiving a ſtipend which would make the pious curate or the learned chaplain rich and happy?

The ſcience of muſic, which uſed to be communicated in ſo competent a degree to a young lady by one able inſtructor, is now diſtributed among a whole band. She now requires, not a maſter, but an orcheſtra. And my country readers would accuſe me of exaggeration were I to hazard enumerating the variety of muſical teachers who attend at the ſame time in the ſame family; the daughters of which are ſummoned, by at leaſt as many inſtruments as the ſubjects of Nebuchadnezzar, to worſhip

the idol which fashion has set up. They would be incredulous were I to produce real instances, in which the delighted mother has been heard to declare, that the visits of masters of every art, and the different masters for various gradations of the same art, followed each other in such close and rapid succession during the whole London residence, that her girls had not a moment's interval to look into a book; nor could she contrive any method to introduce one, till she happily devised the scheme of reading to them herself for half an hour while they were drawing, by which means no time was lost *.

Before

* Since the first edition of this Work appeared, the author has received from a person of great eminence the following statement, ascertaining the *time* employed in the acquisition of music in one instance. As a *general* calculation, it will perhaps be found to be so far from exaggerated, as to be below the truth. The statement concludes with remarking, that the individual who is the subject of it is now married to a man who *dislikes music!*

Suppose

Before the evil is past redress, it will be prudent to reflect that in all polished countries an entire devotedness to the fine arts has been one grand source of the corruption of the women; and so justly were these pernicious consequences appreciated by the Greeks, among whom these arts were carried to the highest possible perfection, that they seldom allowed them to be cultivated to a very exquisite degree by women of great purity of character. And if the ambition of an elegant British lady should be fired by the idea that the accomplished females of those polished states were the admired companions of the philosophers, the poets, the wits, and the

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Suppose your pupil to begin at six years of age, and to continue at the average of four hours a-day *only*, Sunday excepted, and thirteen days allowed for travelling annually, till she is eighteen, the state stands thus: 300 days multiplied by four, the number of hours amount to 1200; that number multiplied by twelve, which is the number of years, amounts to 14,400 hours!

artiſts of Athens; and their beauty or talents, ſo much the favourite ſubjects of the muſe, the lyre, the pencil, and the chiſſel; that their pictures and ſtatues furniſhed the moſt conſummate models of Grecian art: If I ſay, the accompliſhed females of our days are panting for ſimilar renown, let their modeſty chaſtiſe their ambition, by recollecting that theſe celebrated women are not to be found among the chaſte women and the virtuous daughters of the Ariſtides's, the Agis's, and the Phocions; but that they are to be looked for among the Phrynes, the Lais's, the Aſpaſias, and the Glyceras. I am perſuaded the Chriſtian female, whatever be her taſte or her talents, will renounce the deſire of any celebrity when attached to impurity of character, with the ſame noble indignation with which the virtuous biographer of the above-named heroes renounced any kind of diſhoneſt fame, by exclaiming, "I had rather it ſhould be ſaid "there never was a Plutarch, than that

"they ſhould ſay Plutarch was malignant, "unjuſt, or envious *."

And while this corruption, brought on by an exceſſive cultivation of the arts, has contributed its full ſhare to the decline of ſtates, it has always furniſhed an infallible ſymptom of their impending fall. The ſatires of the moſt penetrating and judicious of the Roman poets, corroborating the teſtimonies of the moſt accurate of their hiſtorians, abound with invectives againſt the general depravity of manners introduced by the corrupt habits of female education. The bitterneſs and groſs indelicacy of ſome of theſe ſatiriſts (too groſs to be either quoted or referred to) make little againſt their authority in theſe points; for how ſhocking muſt thoſe corruptions have been, and how obviouſly offenſive their cauſes, which could have

* No cenſure is levelled at the exertions of real genius, which is as valuable as it is rare; but at the abſurdity of that ſyſtem which is erecting *the whole ſex* into artiſts.

appeared ſo highly diſguſting to minds ſo coarſe as not likely to be ſcandalized by ſlight deviations from decency! The famous ode of Horace, attributing the vices and diſaſters of his degenerate country to the ſame cauſe, might, were it quite free from the above objections, be produced, I will not preſume to ſay as an exact picture of the exiſting manners of this country; but may I not venture to ſay, as a prophecy, the fulfilment of which cannot be very remote? It may however be obſerved, that the modeſty of the Roman matron, and the chaſte demeanor of her virgin daughters, which amidſt the ſtern virtues of the ſtate were as immaculate and pure as the honour of the Roman citizen, fell a ſacrifice to the luxurious diſſipation brought in by their Aſiatic conqueſts; after which the females were ſoon taught a complete change of character. They were inſtructed to accommodate their talents of pleaſing to the more vitiated taſtes of the other ſex; and began to

ſtudy

ſtudy every grace and every art which might captivate the exhauſted hearts, and excite the wearied and capricious inclinations of the men; till by a rapid and at length complete enervation, the Roman character loſt its ſignature, and through a quick ſucceſſion of ſlavery, effeminacy, and vice, ſunk into that degeneracy of which ſome of the modern Italian ſtates ſerve to furniſh a too juſt ſpecimen.

It is of the eſſence of human things that the ſame objects which are highly uſeful in their ſeaſon, meaſure, and degree, become miſchievous in their exceſs, at other periods and under other circumſtances. In a ſtate of barbariſm, the arts are among the beſt reformers; and they go on to be improved themſelves, and improving thoſe who cultivate them, till, having reached a certain point, thoſe very arts which were the inſtruments of civilization and refinement, become inſtruments of corruption and decay; enervating and depraving in the ſecond inſtance, by the exceſs and univerſality of

their cultivation, as certainly as they refined in the firſt. They become agents of voluptuouſneſs. They excite the imagination; and the imagination thus excited, and no longer under the government of ſtrict principle, becomes the moſt dangerous ſtimulant of the paſſions; promotes a too keen reliſh for pleaſure, teaching how to multiply its ſources, and inventing new and pernicious modes of artificial gratification.

May we not rank among the preſent corrupt conſequences of this unbounded cultivation, the unchaſte *coſtume*, the impure ſtyle of dreſs, and that indelicate ſtatue-like exhibition of the female figure, which by its artfully-diſpoſed folds, its ſeemingly wet and adheſive drapery, ſo defines the form as to prevent covering itſelf from becoming a veil? This licentious mode, as the acute Monteſquieu obſerved on the dances of the Spartan virgins, has taught us "to ſtrip chaſtity itſelf of "modeſty."

May

May the author be allowed to addreſs to our own country and our own circumſtances, to both of which they ſeem peculiarly applicable, the ſpirit of that beautiful apoſtrophe of the moſt poliſhed poet of antiquity to the moſt victorious nation? "Let us leave to the inhabitants "of *conquered countries* the praiſe of "carrying to the very higheſt degree "of perfection, ſculpture and the ſiſter "arts; but let *this* country direct her "own exertions to the art of governing mankind in equity and peace, "of ſhewing mercy to the ſubmiſſive, "and of abaſing the proud among ſurrounding nations*."

* Let me not be ſuſpected of bringing into any ſort of compariſon the gentleneſs of Britiſh government with the rapacity of Roman conqueſts, or the principles of Roman dominion. To ſpoil, to butcher, and to commit every kind of violence, they call, ſays one of the ableſt of their hiſtorians, by the lying name of *government*, and when they have ſpread a general deſolation, they call it *peace* (1).

(1) Tacitus' Life of Agricola, ſpeech of Galgacus to his ſoldiers.

With such *dictatorial*, or, as we might now read, *dictatorial* inquisitors, we can have no point of contact; and if I have applied the servile flattery of a delightful poet to the purpose of English happiness, it was only to shew wherein true national grandeur consists, and that every country pays too dear a price for those arts and embellishments of society which endanger the loss of its morals and manners.

CHAP. III.

External Improvement.—Children's Balls.—French Governeſſes.

LET me not however be miſunderſtood. The cuſtoms which faſhion has eſtabliſhed, when not in direct oppoſition to what is right, ſhould unqueſtionably be purſued in the education of ladies. Piety maintains no natural war with elegance, and Chriſtianity would be no gainer by making her diſciples unamiable. Religion does not forbid that the exterior be made to a certain degree the object of attention. But the admiration beſtowed, the ſums expended, and the time laviſhed on arts which add little to the intrinſic value of life, ſhould have limitations. While theſe arts ſhould be admired, let them not be admired above their juſt value: while they are practiſed, let it not be

be to the excluſion of higher employments; while they are cultivated, let it be to amuſe leiſure, not to engroſs life.

But it happens unfortunately, that to ordinary obſervers, the girl who is really receiving the worſt inſtruction often makes the beſt figure; while in the more correct but leſs oſtenſible education, the deep and ſure foundations to which the edifice will owe its ſtrength and ſtability lie out of ſight. The outward accompliſhments have the dangerous advantage of addreſſing themſelves more immediately to the ſenſes, and of courſe meet everywhere with thoſe who can in ſome meaſure appreciate as well as admire them; for all can ſee and hear, but all cannot ſcrutinize and diſcriminate. External acquirements too recommend themſelves the more, becauſe they are more rapidly as well as more viſibly progreſſive. While the mind is led on to improvement by ſlow motions and imperceptible degrees; while the heart muſt now be admoniſhed by reproof, and

now

now allured by kindneſs; its livelieſt advances being ſuddenly impeded by obſtinacy, and its brighteſt proſpects often obſcured by paſſion; it is ſlow in its acquiſitions of virtue, and reluctant in its approaches to piety. The unruly and turbulent propenſities of the mind are not ſo obedient to the forming hand as defects of manner or awkwardneſs of gait. Often when we fancy that a troubleſome paſſion is completely cruſhed, we have the mortification to find that we have "ſcotch'd the "ſnake, not killed it." One evil temper ſtarts up before another is conquered. The ſubduing hand cannot cut off the ever-ſprouting heads ſo faſt as the prolific Hydra can re-produce them, nor fell the ſtubborn Antæus ſo often as he can recruit his ſtrength, and riſe in vigorous and repeated oppoſition.

Hired teachers are alſo under a diſadvantage reſembling tenants at rack-rent; it is their intereſt to bring in an immediate revenue of praiſe and profit, and, for the ſake

ſake of a preſent rich crop, thoſe who are not ſtrictly conſcientious, do not care how much the ground is impoveriſhed for future produce. But parents, who are the lords of the ſoil, muſt look to permanent value, and to continued fruitfulneſs. The beſt effects of a careful education are often very remote; they are to be diſcovered in future ſcenes, and exhibited in as yet untried connexions. Every event of life will be putting the heart into freſh ſituations, and making new demands on its prudence, its firmneſs, its integrity, or its forbearance. Thoſe whoſe buſineſs it is to form and model it, cannot foreſee thoſe contingent ſituations ſpecifically and diſtinctly; yet, as far as human wiſdom will allow, they muſt enable it to prepare for them all by general principles, correct habits, and an unremitting ſenſe of dependence on the Great Diſpoſer of events. The young Chriſtian militant muſt learn and practiſe all his evolutions, though he does not know on what ſervice his leader may command him, by what particular

foe

ſoe he ſhall be moſt aſſailed, nor what mode of attack the enemy may employ.

But the contrary of all this is the caſe with external acquiſitions. The maſter, it is his intereſt, will induſtriouſly inſtruct his young pupil to ſet all her improvements in the moſt immediate and conſpicuous point of view. To attract admiration is the great principle ſedulouſly inculcated into her young heart; and is conſidered as the fundamental maxim; and, perhaps, if we were required to condenſe the reigning ſyſtem of the brilliant education of a lady into an aphoriſm, it might be compriſed in this ſhort ſentence, *To allure and to ſhine.* This ſyſtem however is the fruitful germ, from which a thouſand yet unborn vanities, with all their multiplied ramifications, will ſpring. A tender mother cannot but feel an honeſt triumph in completing thoſe talents in her daughter which will neceſſarily excite admiration; but ſhe will alſo ſhudder at the vanity that admiration may excite, and at

the new ideas it will awaken; and, ſtartling as it may ſound, the labours of a wiſe mother anxious for her daughter's beſt intereſts, will ſeem to be at variance with thoſe of all her teachers. She will indeed rejoice at her progreſs, but ſhe will rejoice with trembling; for ſhe is fully aware that if all poſſible accompliſhments could be bought at the price of a ſingle virtue, of a ſingle principle, the purchaſe would be infinitely dear, and ſhe would reject the dazzling but deſtructive acquiſition. She knows that the ſuperſtructure of the accompliſhments can be alone ſafely erected on the broad and ſolid baſis of Chriſtian humility: nay more, that as the materials of which that ſuperſtructure is to be compoſed, are in themſelves of ſo unſtable and tottering a nature, the foundation muſt be deepened and enlarged with more abundant care, otherwiſe the fabric will be overloaded with its own ornaments, and what was intended only to embelliſh the building, will prove the occaſion of its fall.

"To

"To every thing there is a ſeaſon, and "a time for every purpoſe under heaven," ſaid the wiſe man; but he ſaid it before the invention of baby-balls; an invention which has formed a kind of æra in the annals of poliſhed education. This modern device is a ſort of triple conſpiracy againſt the innocence, the health, and the happineſs of children; thus, by factitious amuſements, to rob them of a reliſh for the ſimple joys, the unbought delights, which naturally belong to their blooming ſeaſon, is like blotting out ſpring from the year. To ſacrifice the true and proper enjoyments of ſprightly and happy children, is to make them pay a dear and diſproportionate price for their artificial pleaſures. They ſtep at once from the nurſery to the ball-room; and, by a change of habits as new as it is prepoſterous, are thinking of dreſſing themſelves, at an age when they uſed to be dreſſing their dolls. Inſtead of bounding with the unreſtrained freedom of

little wood-nymphs, over hill and dale, their cheeks flushed with health, and their hearts overflowing with happiness, these *gay* little creatures are shut up all the morning, demurely practising the *pas grave*, and transacting the serious business of acquiring a new step for the evening, with more cost of time and pains than it would have taken them to acquire twenty new ideas.

Thus they lose the amusements which naturally belong to their smiling period, and naturally anticipate those pleasures (such as they are) which would come in, too much of course, on their introduction into fashionable life. The true pleasures of childhood are cheap and natural; for every object teems with delight to eyes and hearts new to the enjoyment of life; nay, the hearts of healthy children abound with a general disposition to mirth and joyfulness, even without a specific object to excite it; like our first parent, in the world's

world's firſt ſpring, when all was new, and freſh, and gay about him,

they live and move,
And feel that they are happier than they know.

Only furniſh them with a few ſimple and harmleſs materials, and a little, but not too much, leiſure, and they will manufacture their own pleaſures with more ſkill, and ſucceſs, and ſatisfaction, than they will receive from all that your money can purchaſe. Their bodily recreations ſhould be ſuch as will promote their health, quicken their activity, enliven their ſpirits, whet their ingenuity, and qualify them for their mental work. But, if you begin thus early to create wants, to invent gratifications, to multiply deſires, to waken dormant ſenſibilities, to ſtir up hidden fires, you are ſtudiouſly laying up for your children a ſtore of premature caprice, and irritability, and diſcontent.

While childhood preſerves its native ſimplicity, every little change is intereſting, every gratification is a luxury; a ride or a

walk, a garland of flowers of her own forming, a plant of her own cultivating, will be a delightful amuſement to a child in her natural ſtate; but it will be dull and taſteleſs to a ſophiſticated little creature, nurſed in theſe forced, and coſtly, and vapid pleaſures. Alas! that we ſhould throw away this firſt grand opportunity of working into a practical habit the moral of this important truth, that the chief ſource of human diſcontent is to be looked for, not in our real, but in our factitious wants; not in the demands of nature, but in the artificial cravings of deſire!

When one ſees the growing zeal to crowd the midnight ball with theſe pretty fairies, one would be almoſt tempted to fancy it was a kind of pious emulation among the mothers to cure their infants of a fondneſs for vain and fooliſh pleaſures by tiring them out by this premature familiarity with them; and that they were actuated by ſomething of the ſame principle which led the Spartans to introduce their ſons to ſcenes of riot, that they might conceive

conceive an early diſguſt at vice! or poſſibly, that they imitated thoſe Scythian mothers who uſed to plunge their new-born infants into the flood, thinking none to be worth ſaving who could not ſtand this early ſtruggle for their lives; the greater part, indeed, as it might have been expected, periſhed; but the parents took comfort, that if many were loſt, the few who eſcaped would be the ſtronger for having been thus expoſed.

To behold lilliputian coquettes, projecting dreſſes, ſtudying colours, aſſorting ribands and feathers, their little hearts beating with hopes about partners and fears about rivals; and to ſee their freſh cheeks pale after the midnight ſupper, their aching heads and unbraced nerves, diſqualifying the little languid beings for the next day's taſk; and to hear the grave apology, "that it is owing to the wine, the "crowd, the heated room of the laſt "night's ball;" all this, I ſay, would really be as ludicrous, if the miſchief of

the thing did not take off from the merriment of it, as any of the ridiculous and prepoſterous diſproportions in the diverting travels of Captain Lemuel Gulliver.

Under a juſt impreſſion of the evils which we are ſuſtaining from the principles and the practices of *modern* France, we are apt to loſe ſight of thoſe deep and laſting miſchiefs which ſo long, ſo regularly, and ſo ſyſtematically, we have been importing from the ſame country, though in another form and under another government. In one reſpect, indeed, the firſt were the more formidable, becauſe we embraced the ruin without ſuſpecting it; while we defeat the malignity of the latter, by detecting the turpitude and defending ourſelves againſt it. This is not the place to deſcant on that levity of manners, that contempt of the Sabbath, that fatal familiarity with looſe principles, and thoſe relaxed notions of conjugal fidelity, which have often been tranſplanted into this country by women of faſhion,

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as a too common effect of a long reſidence in that: but it is peculiarly ſuitable to my ſubject to advert to another domeſtic miſchief derived from the ſame foreign extraction: I mean, the riſks that have been run, and the ſacrifices which have been made, in order to furniſh our young ladies with the means of acquiring the French language in the greateſt poſſible purity. Perfection in this accompliſhment has been ſo long eſtabliſhed as the ſupreme object; ſo long conſidered as the predominant excellence to which all other excellencies muſt bow down, that it would be hopeleſs to attack a law which faſhion has immutably decreed, and which has received the ſtamp of long preſcription. We muſt, therefore, be contented with expreſſing a wiſh, that this indiſpenſable perfection could have been attained at the expence of ſacrifices leſs important. It is with the greater regret I animadvert on this and ſome other prevailing practices, as they are errors into which the wiſe

and reſpectable have, through want of conſideration, or rather through want of firmneſs to reſiſt the tyranny of faſhion, ſometimes fallen. It has not been unuſual when mothers of rank and reputation have been aſked how they ventured to intruſt their daughters to foreigners, of whoſe principles they knew nothing, except that they were Roman Catholics, to anſwer, "That they had taken care to be ſecure "on that ſubject; for that it had been "ſtipulated that *the queſtion of religion* "*ſhould never be agitated between the* "*teacher and the pupil.*" This, it muſt be confeſſed, is a moſt deſperate remedy; it is like ſtarving to death, to avoid being poiſoned. And one cannot help trembling for the event of that education, from which religion, as far as the governeſs is concerned, is thus formally and ſyſtematically excluded. Surely it would not be exacting too much, to ſuggeſt at leaſt that an attention no leſs ſcrupulous ſhould be exerted to inſure the character of our children's

children's inſtructor, for piety and knowledge, than is thought neceſſary to aſcertain that ſhe has nothing *patois* in her dialect.

I would rate a correct pronunciation and an elegant phraſeology at their juſt price, and I would not rate them low; but I would not offer up principle as a victim to ſounds and accents. And the matter is now made more eaſy; for whatever diſgrace it might once have brought on an Engliſh lady to have had it ſuſpected from her accent that ſhe had the misfortune not to be born in a neighbouring country; ſome recent events may ſerve to reconcile her to the ſuſpicion of having been bred in her own: a country, to which (with all its ſins, which are many!) the whole world is looking up with envy and admiration, as the ſeat of true glory and of comparative happineſs: a country, in which the exile, driven out by the crimes of his own, finds a home; a country, to obtain the protection of which it was claim enough to be unfortunate; and no im-

pediment to have been the ſubject of her direſt foe! a country, which in this reſpect humbly imitating the Father of compaſſion, when it offered mercy to a ſuppliant enemy, never conditioned for merit, nor inſiſted on the virtues of the miſerable as a preliminary to its own bounty!

CHAP. IV.

Compariſon of the mode of female education in the laſt age with the preſent.

To return, however, to the ſubject of general education. A young lady may excel in ſpeaking French and Italian, may repeat a few paſſages from a volume of extracts; play like a profeſſor, and ſing like a ſyren; have her dreſſing-room decorated with her own drawings, tables, ſtands, flower-pots, ſcreens, and cabinets; nay, ſhe may dance like Sempronia * herſelf, and yet may have been very badly educated. I am far from meaning to ſet no value whatever on any or all of theſe qualifications; they are all of them elegant, and many of them properly tend to the per-

* See Cataline's Conſpiracy.

fecting

fecting of a polite education. Theſe things in their meaſure and degree, may be done, but there are others which ſhould not be left undone. Many things are becoming, but "one thing is needful." Beſides, as the world ſeems to be fully apprized of the value of whatever tends to embelliſh life, there is leſs occaſion here to inſiſt on its importance.

But, though a well-bred young lady may lawfully learn moſt of the faſhionable arts, yet it does not ſeem to be the true end of education to make women of faſhion *dancers*, *ſingers*, *players*, *painters*, *actreſſes*, *ſculptors*, *gilders*, *varniſhers*, *engravers*, and *embroiderers*. Moſt *men* are commonly deſtined to ſome profeſſion, and their minds are conſequently turned each to its reſpective object. Would it not be ſtrange if they were called out to exerciſe their profeſſion, or to ſet up their trade, with only a little general knowledge of the trades of all other men, and without any previous definite application to

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their own peculiar calling? The profeſſion of ladies, to which the bent of *their* inſtruction ſhould be turned, is that of daughters, wives, mothers, and miſtreſſes of families. They ſhould be therefore trained with a view to theſe ſeveral conditions, and be furniſhed with a ſtock of ideas, and principles, and qualifications, and habits, ready to be applied and appropriated, as occaſion may demand, to each of theſe reſpective ſituations: for though the arts which merely embelliſh life muſt claim admiration; yet when a man of ſenſe comes to marry, it is a companion whom he wants and not an artiſt. It is not merely a creature who can paint, and play, and dreſs, and dance; it is a being who can comfort and counſel him; one who can reaſon, and reflect, and feel, and judge, and act, and diſcourſe, and diſcriminate; one who can aſſiſt him in his affairs, lighten his cares, ſoothe his ſorrows, purify his joys, ſtrengthen his principles, and educate his children.

Almoſt

Almoſt any ornamental talent is a good thing, when it is not the beſt thing a woman has; and talents are admirable when not made to ſtand proxy for virtues. The writer of theſe pages is intimately acquainted with ſeveral ladies who, excelling moſt of their ſex in the art of muſic, but excelling them alſo in prudence and piety, find little leiſure or temptation, amidſt the delights and duties of a large and lovely family, for the exerciſe of this talent, and regret that ſo much of their own youth was waſted in acquiring an art which can be turned to ſo little account in married life; and are now conſcientiouſly reſtricting their daughters in the portion of time allotted to its acquiſition.

Far be it from me to diſcourage the cultivation of any exiſting talent; but may it not be queſtioned of the fond believing mother, whether talents, like the ſpirits of Owen Glendower, though conjured by

parental

parental partiality with ever ſo loud a voice,

Yet will they come when you do call for them?

That injudicious practice, therefore, cannot be too much diſcouraged, of endeavouring to create talents which do not exiſt in nature. *That their daughters ſhall learn every thing*, is ſo general a maternal maxim, that even unborn daughters, of whoſe expected abilities and conjectured faculties, it is preſumed, no very accurate judgment can previouſly be formed, are yet predeſtined to this univerſality of accompliſhments. This comprehenſive maxim, thus almoſt univerſally brought into practice, at once weakens the general powers of the mind, by drawing off its ſtrength into too great a variety of directions; and cuts up time into too many portions, by ſplitting it into ſuch an endleſs multiplicity of employments. I know that I am treading on tender ground; but I cannot help thinking that the

the reſtleſs pains we take to cram up every little vacuity of life, by crowding one new thing upon another, rather creates a thirſt for novelty than knowledge; and is but a well-diſguiſed contrivance to keep us in after-life more effectually from converſing with ourſelves. The care taken to prevent *ennui* is but a creditable plan for promoting ſelf-ignorance. We run from one occupation to another, (I ſpeak of thoſe arts to which little intellect is applied,) with a view to lighten the preſſure of time; above all, we fly to them to ſave us from our own thoughts; whereas were we thrown a little more on our own hands, we might at laſt be driven, by way of ſomething to do, to try to get acquainted with our own hearts; and though our being leſs abſorbed by this buſy trifling, which dignifies its inanity with the impoſing name of occupation, might render us ſomewhat more ſenſible of the tedium of life; yet might not this very ſenſation tend to quicken our purſuit

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of a better? For an awful thought here ſuggeſts itſelf. If life be ſo long that we are driven to ſet at work every engine to paſs away the tedioufneſs of time; how ſhall we do to get rid of the tedioufneſs of eternity? an eternity in which not one of the acquiſitions which life has been exhauſted in acquiring, will be of the leaſt uſe? Let not then the ſoul be ſtarved by feeding it on ſuch unſubſtantial aliment, for it can be no more nouriſhed by theſe empty huſks than the body can be fed with ideas and principles.

Among the boaſted improvements of the preſent age, none affords more frequent matter of peculiar exultation, than the manifeſt ſuperiority in the employments of the young ladies of our time over thoſe of the good houſewives of the laſt century. It is matter of triumph, that they are at preſent employed in learning the polite arts, or in acquiring liberal accompliſhments; while the others wore out their joyleſs days in adorning the manſion-

houſe with hangings of hideous tapeſtry and diſfiguring tent-ſtitch. Moſt chearfully do I allow to the reigning modes their boaſted ſuperiority; for certainly there is no piety in bad taſte. Still, granting all the deformity of the exploded ornaments, one advantage attended them; the walls and floors were not vain of their decorations; and it is to be feared, that the little perſon ſometimes is. The flattery beſtowed on the obſolete employments, for probably even *they* had their flatterers, furniſhed leſs aliment and leſs gratification to vanity, and was leſs likely to impair the delicacy and modeſty of the ſex than the exquiſite cultivation of perſonal accompliſhments or perſonal decorations; and every mode which keeps down vanity, and keeps back *ſelf*, has at leaſt a moral uſe. And while one admires the elegant fingers of a young lady, buſied in working or painting her ball dreſs, one cannot help ſuſpecting that her alacrity may be a little ſtimulated by the animating idea *how very well ſhe ſhall look*

in it. Nor was the industrious matron of Ithaca more soothed at her solitary loom with the sweet reflection that by her labour she was gratifying her filial and conjugal feelings, than the pleasure-loving damsel of Britain, by the anticipated admiration which her ingenuity is procuring for her beauty!

Might not this propensity be a little checked, and an interesting feeling combined with her industry, were the fair artist habituated to exercise her skill in adorning some one else rather than herself? For it will add no lightness to the lightest head, nor vanity to the vainest heart, to take pleasure in reflecting how exceedingly the gown she is working will become her mother. This suggestion, trifling as it may seem, of habituating young ladies to exercise their taste and devote their leisure, not to the decoration of their own persons, but to the service of those to whom they are bound by every tender tie, would not only help to

repreſs vanity, but by thus aſſociating the idea of induſtry with that of filial affection, would promote, while it gratified ſome of the beſt affections of the heart. The Romans (and it is mortifying on the ſubject of Chriſtian education to be driven ſo often to refer to the ſuperiority of Pagans) were ſo well aware of the importance of keeping up a ſenſe of family fondneſs and attachment by the very ſame means which promoted ſimple and domeſtic employment, that no citizen of note ever appeared in public in any garb but what was ſpun by his wife and daughter; and this virtuous faſhion was not confined to the days of republican ſeverity, but even in all the pomp and luxury of imperial power, Auguſtus preſerved in his own family this ſimplicity of manners.

Let me be allowed to repeat, that I mean not with prepoſterous praiſe to deſcant on the ignorance or the prejudices of paſt times, nor abſurdly to regret that vulgar ſyſtem of education which rounded

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the little circle of female acquirements within the limits of the ſampler and the receipt-book. Yet if a preference almoſt excluſive was then given to what was merely uſeful, a preference almoſt excluſive alſo is now aſſigned to what is merely ornamental. And it muſt be owned, that if the life of a young lady, formerly, too much reſembled the life of a confectioner, it now too much reſembles that of an actreſs; the morning is all rehearſal, and the evening is all performance: and thoſe who are trained in this regular routine, who are inſtructed in order to be exhibited, ſoon learn to feel a ſort of impatience in thoſe ſocieties in which *their* kind of talents are not likely to be brought into play; the taſk of an auditor becomes dull to her who has been uſed to be a performer. Eſteem and kindneſs become but cold ſubſtitutes to her who has been pampered with plaudits and acclamations. And the exceſſive commendation which the viſitor is expected to pay for his entertain-

ment not only keeps alive the flame of vanity in the artist by constant fuel, but is not seldom exacted at a price which a veracity at all strict would grudge; but when a whole circle are obliged to be competitors who shall flatter most, it is not easy to be at once very sincere and very civil. And unluckily, while the age is become so knowing and so fastidious, that if a young lady does not play like a public performer, no one thinks her worth attending to; yet if she does so excel, some of the sobereſt of the admiring circle feel a strong alloy to their pleasure, on reflecting at what a vast expence of time this perfection must probably have been acquired *.

* That accurate judge of the human heart, Madame de Maintenon, was so well aware of the danger resulting from some kinds of excellence, that after the young ladies of the Court of Louis Quatorze had distinguished themselves by the performance of some dramatic pieces of Racine, when her friends told her how admirably they had played their parts; "Yes," answered this wise woman, "so admirably "that they shall never play again."

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The ſtudy of the fine arts indeed is forced on young perſons, with or without genius, (faſhion as was ſaid before having ſwallowed up that diſtinction,) to ſuch exceſs, as to vex, fatigue, and diſguſt thoſe who have no talents, and to determine them, as ſoon as they become free agents, to abandon all ſuch tormenting acquirements. While by this inceſſant purſuit ſtill more pernicious effects are often produced on thoſe who actually poſſeſs genius; for the natural conſtant reference to that public performance for which they are ſedulouſly cultivating this talent, excites the ſame paſſions of envy, vanity, and competition in the dilettanti performers, as might be ſuppoſed to ſtimulate profeſſional candidates for fame and profit at public games and theatrical exhibitions. Is this emulation, is this ſpirit of rivalry the temper which prudent parents would wiſh to excite and foſter? Beſides, in *any* event the iſſue is not favourable: if the young performers are timid, they diſgrace themſelves

and diſtreſs their friends; if courageous, their boldneſs offends ſtill more than their bad performance. Shall they then be ſtudiouſly brought into ſituations in which failure diſcredits and ſucceſs diſguſts?

May I venture, without being accuſed of pedantry, to conclude this chapter with another reference to Pagan examples? The Hebrews, Egyptians and Greeks, believed that they could more effectually teach their youth maxims of virtue, by calling in the aid of muſic and poetry; theſe maxims, therefore, they put into verſes, and theſe again were ſet to the moſt popular and ſimple tunes, which the children ſang; thus was their love of goodneſs excited by the very inſtruments of their pleaſure; and the ſenſes, the taſte, and the imagination, as it were, preſſed into the ſervice of religion and morals. Dare I appeal to Chriſtian parents, if theſe arts are commonly uſed by *them* as ſubſidiary to religion and to a ſyſtem of morals much more worthy of every ingenious aid

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and aſſociation, which might tend to recommend them to the youthful mind? Dare I appeal to Chriſtian parents, whether muſic, which fills up no trifling portion of their daughters' time, does not fill it without any moral end, or even ſpecific object? Nay, whether ſome of the favourite ſongs of poliſhed ſocieties are not amatory, are not Anacreontic, more than quite become the modeſt lips of innocent youth and delicate beauty?

CHAP. V.

On the religious employment of time.—On the manner in which holidays are paſſed.—Selfiſhneſs and inconſideration conſidered.—Dangers ariſing from the world.

THERE are many well-diſpoſed parents who, while they attend to theſe faſhionable acquirements, do not neglect to infuſe religious knowledge into the minds of their children; and having done this are but too apt to conclude that they have fully acquitted themſelves of the important duties of education. For having, as they think, ſufficiently grounded them in religion, they do not ſcruple to allow their daughters to ſpend almoſt the whole of their time exactly like the daughters of worldly people. Now, though it be one great point gained, to have imbued

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their young minds with the beſt knowledge, the work is not therefore by any means accompliſhed. "What do ye more "than others?" is a queſtion which, in a more extended ſenſe, religious parents muſt be prepared to anſwer.

Such parents ſhould go on to teach children the religious uſe of time, the duty of conſecrating to God every talent, every faculty, every poſſeſſion, and of devoting their whole lives to his glory. People of piety ſhould be more peculiarly on their guard againſt a ſpirit of idleneſs, and a ſlovenly habitual waſting of time, becauſe this practice, by not aſſuming a palpable ſhape of guilt, carries little alarm to the conſcience. Even religious characters are in danger on this ſide; for not allowing themſelves to follow the world in its exceſſes and diverſions, they have conſequently more time upon their hands; and inſtead of dedicating the time ſo reſcued to its true purpoſes, they ſometimes make as it were compenſation to themſelves for

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their abſtinence from dangerous places of public reſort, by an habitual frivolouſneſs at home; by a ſuperabundance of unprofitable ſmall-talk, idle reading, and a quiet and dull frittering away of time. Their day perhaps has been more free from actual evil; but it will often be found to have been as unproductive as that of more worldly characters; and they will be found to have traded to as little purpoſe with their maſter's talents. But a Chriſtian muſt take care to keep his conſcience peculiarly alive to the unapparent, though formidable perils of unprofitableneſs.

To theſe, and to all, the author would earneſtly recommend to accuſtom their children to paſs at once from ſerious buſineſs to active and animated recreation; they ſhould carefully preſerve them from thoſe long and torpid intervals between both, that languid indolence and ſpiritleſs trifling, which wears out ſuch large portions of life in both young and old. It has indeed paſſed into an aphoriſm,

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that activity is neceſſary to virtue, even among thoſe who are not apprized that it is alſo indiſpenſable to happineſs. So far are many parents from being ſenſible of this truth, that vacations from ſchool are not merely allowed, but appointed to paſs away in weariſome ſauntering and indeterminate idleneſs, and this by way of converting the holidays into pleaſure! Nay, the idleneſs is ſpecifically made over to the child's mind, as the ſtrongeſt expreſſion of the fondneſs of the parent! A diſlike to learning is thus ſyſtematically excited by prepoſterouſly erecting indolence into a reward for application! And the promiſe of doing nothing is held out as the beſt recompence for having done well!

Theſe and ſuch like errors of conduct ariſe from the latent but very operative principle of ſelfiſhneſs. This principle is obviouſly promoted by many habits and practices ſeemingly of little importance; and indeed ſelfiſhneſs is ſo commonly interwoven

interwoven with vanity and inconsideration, that I have not always thought it necessary to mark the distinction. They are alternately cause and effect; and are produced and reproduced by reciprocal operation. They are a joint confederacy who are mutually promoting each other's strength and interest. Ill-judging tenderness is in fact only a concealed self-love, which cannot bear to be witness to the uneasiness which a present disappointment, or difficulty, or vexation, would cause to a darling child, yet does not scruple by improper gratification to store up for it future miseries, which the child will infallibly suffer, though it may be at a distant period which the mother will be saved the pain of beholding.

Another principle something different from this, though it may properly fall under the head of selfishness, seems to actuate some parents in their conduct towards their children: I mean, a certain slothfulness of mind, a love of ease, which imposes a voluntary blindness, and makes

them

them not choose to see what will give them trouble to combat. From the persons in question we frequently hear such expressions as these: "Children will be chil-"dren:"—"My children I suppose are "much like those of other people," &c. Thus we may observe this dangerous and delusive principle frequently turning off with a smile from the first indications of those tempers, which from their fatal tendency ought to be very seriously taken up. I would be understood now as speaking to conscientious parents, who consider it as a duty to correct the faults of their children; but who, from this indolence of mind, are extremely backward in *discovering* such faults, and not very well pleased when they are pointed out by others. Such parents will do well to take notice that whatever they consider it as a duty to *correct*, must be equally a duty to endeavour to *find out*. And this love of ease is the more to be guarded against, as it not only leads parents into erroneous

conduct towards their children, but is peculiarly dangerous to themſelves. It is a fault frequently cheriſhed from ignorance of its real character; for, not bearing on it the ſtrong features of deformity which mark many other vices, but on the contrary bearing ſome reſemblance to virtue, it is frequently miſtaken for the Chriſtian graces of patience, meekneſs, and forbearance, than which nothing can be more oppoſite; theſe proceeding from the Chriſtian principle of ſelf-denial, the other from ſelf-indulgence.

In this connection may I be permitted to remark on the practice at the tables of many families when the children are at home for the holidays; every delicacy is forced upon them, with the tempting remark, "that they cannot have this "or that dainty at ſchool;" and they are indulged in irregular hours for the ſame motive, "becauſe they cannot have that "indulgence at ſchool." Thus the natural ſeeds of idleneſs, ſenſuality, and

ſloth, are at once cheriſhed, by converting the periodical viſit at home into a ſeaſon of intemperance, late hours, and exemption from ſtudy; ſo that children are habituated, at an age when laſting aſſociations are formed in the mind, to connect the idea of ſtudy with that of hardſhip, of happineſs with gluttony, and of pleaſure with loitering, feaſting, or ſleeping. Would it not be better to make them combine the delightful idea of home, with the gratification of the ſocial affections, the fondneſs of maternal love, the kindneſs, and warmth, and confidence of the ſweet domeſtic attachments,

——And all the charities
Of father, ſon, and brother?

I will venture to ſay, that theſe liſtleſs and vacant days, when the thoughts have no preciſe object; when the imagination has nothing to ſhape; when induſtry has no definite purſuit; when the mind and the body have no exerciſe, and the ingenuity no acquiſition either to anticipate or to enjoy,

enjoy, are the longeſt, the dulleſt, and the leaſt happy, which children of ſpirit and genius ever paſs. Yes! it is a few ſhort but keen and lively intervals of animated pleaſure, ſnatched from between the ſucceſſive labours and duties of a buſy day, looked forward to with hope, enjoyed with taſte, and recollected without remorſe, which, both to men and to children, yield the trueſt portions of enjoyment. O ſnatch your offspring from adding to the number of thoſe objects of ſupreme commiſeration, who ſeek their happineſs in doing nothing! Life is but a ſhort day; but it is a working day. Activity *may* lead to evil; but inactivity *cannot* be led to good.

Young ladies ſhould alſo be accuſtomed to ſet apart a fixed portion of their time, as ſacred to the poor*, whether in relieving,

* It would be a noble employment, and well becoming the tenderneſs of their ſex, if ladies were to conſider the ſuperintendance of the poor as their immediate office. They are peculiarly fitted for it; for

lieving, inſtructing, or working for them; and the performance of this duty muſt not be left to the event of contingent circumſtances, or the operation of accidental impreſſions; but it muſt be eſtabliſhed into a principle, and wrought into a habit. A ſpecific portion of time muſt be allotted to it, on which no common engagement muſt be allowed to intrench. This will help to furniſh a powerful remedy for that ſelfiſhneſs whoſe ſtrong holds, the truth cannot be too often

for from their own habits of life they are more intimately acquainted with domeſtic wants than the other ſex; and in certain inſtances of ſickneſs and ſuffering peculiar to themſelves, they ſhould be expected to have more ſympathy; and they have obviouſly more leiſure. There is a certain religious ſociety, diſtinguiſhed by the ſimplicity of their dreſs, manners, and language, whoſe poor are perhaps better taken care of than any other; and one reaſon may be, that they are immediately under the inſpection of the women.

repeated, it is the grand buſineſs of Chriſtian education perpetually to attack. If we were but aware how much better it makes ourſelves to wiſh to ſee others better, and to aſſiſt in making them ſo, we ſhould find that the good done would be of as much importance by the habit it would induce in our own minds, as by its beneficial effects on others *.

In what relates to pecuniary bounty, it will be requiring of children a very ſmall ſacrifice, if you teach them merely to give that money to the poor which properly belongs to the parent; this ſort of charity commonly ſubtracts little from

* In addition to the inſtruction of the individual poor, and the ſuperintendance of charity ſchools, ladies might be highly uſeful in aſſiſting the parochial clergy in the adoption of that excellent plan for the inſtruction of the ignorant ſuggeſted by the Biſhop of Durham in his laſt admirable charge to his clergy. It is with pleaſure the author is enabled to add that the ſcheme has actually been adopted with good effect in that extenſive dioceſe.

their

their own pleaſures, eſpecially when what they have beſtowed is immediately made up to them as a reward for their little fit of generoſity. They will, on this plan, ſoon learn to give, not only for praiſe but for profit. The ſacrifice of an orange to a little girl, or a feather to a great one, given at the expence of their own gratification, would be a better leſſon of charity on its right ground, than a conſiderable ſum of money to be preſently replaced by the parent. And it would be habituating them early to combine two ideas which ought never to be ſeparated, charity and ſelf-denial.

As an antidote to ſelfiſhneſs, as well as pride and indolence, they ſhould alſo very early be taught to perform all the little offices in their power for themſelves; not to be inſolently calling for ſervants where there is no real occaſion; above all, they ſhould be accuſtomed to conſider the domeſtics' hours of meals and reſt as almoſt ſacred, and the golden rule ſhould

be practically and uniformly enforced, even on ſo trifling an occaſion as ringing a bell through mere wantonneſs, or ſelf-love, or pride.

To check the growth of inconſiderateneſs, young ladies ſhould early be taught to diſcharge their little debts with punctuality. They ſhould be made ſenſible of the cruelty of obliging trades-people to call often for the money due to them; and of hindering and detaining thoſe whoſe time is the ſource of their ſubſiſtence, under pretence of ſome frivolous engagement, which ought to be made to bend to the comfort and advantage of others. They ſhould conſcientiouſly allow ſufficient time for the execution of their orders; and with a Chriſtian circumſpection, be careful not to drive work-people, by needleſs hurry, into loſing their reſt, or breaking the Sabbath. I have known a lady give her gown to a mantua-maker on the Saturday night, to whom ſhe would not for the world ſay in ſo many words,

"You

"You must work through the whole of "Sunday," while she was virtually compelling her to do so, by an injunction to bring the gown home finished on the Monday morning, on pain of her displeasure. To these hardships numbers are continually driven by good-natured but inconsiderate employers. As these petty exactions of inconsideration furnish also a constant aliment to selfishness, let not a desire to counteract them be considered as leading to too minute details; nothing is too frivolous for animadversion, which tends to fix a bad habit in the superior, or to wound the feelings of the dependant.

Would it not be turning those political doctrines, which are now so warmly agitating, to a truly moral account, and give the best practical answer to the popular declamations on the inequality of human conditions, were the rich carefully to instruct their children to soften that inevitable inequality by the mildness

and tenderneſs of their behaviour to their inferiors? This diſpenſation of God, which excites ſo many murmurs, would, were it thus practically improved, tend to eſtabliſh the glory of that Being who is now ſo often reviled for his injuſtice; for God himſelf is covertly attacked in many of the invectives againſt laws, and governments, and the ſuppoſed unjuſt diſproportion of ranks.

This diſpenſation, thus properly improved, would at once call into exerciſe the generoſity, kindneſs, and forbearance of the ſuperior; and the patience, reſignation, and gratitude of the inferior: and thus, while we were vindicating the *ways* of Providence, we ſhould be accompliſhing his *plan*, by bringing into action thoſe virtues of both claſſes which would have had little exerciſe had there been no inequality in fortune. Thoſe who are ſo zealouſly contending for the privileges of rank and power, ſhould never loſe ſight of the religious duties and conſiderate virtues which the poſſeſſion of rank and

power

power impoſes on themſelves; duties and virtues which ſhould ever be inſeparable from thoſe privileges. As the inferior claſſes have little real right to complain of *laws*, in this reſpect let the great be watchful to give them as little cauſe to complain of *manners*. In order to this, let them carefully train up their children to ſupply by individual kindneſs thoſe caſes of hardſhip which laws cannot reach; let them obviate, by an active and well directed compaſſion, thoſe imperfections of which the beſt conſtructed human inſtitutions muſt unavoidably partake; and, by the exerciſe of private bounty, early inculcated, ſoften thoſe diſtreſſes which can never come under the cogniſance of public laws: by ſuch means every leſſon of politics may be converted into a leſſon of piety; and a ſpirit of condeſcending love might win over ſome, whom a ſpirit of invective will only inflame.

It can never be too often repeated, that one of the great objects of education

is the forming of habits. Among the inſtances of negligence into which even religiouſly diſpoſed parents and teachers are apt to fall, one is, that they are not ſufficiently attentive in finding intereſting employment for the Sunday. They do not make a ſcruple of ſometimes allowing their children to fill up the intervals of public worſhip with their ordinary employments and common ſchool exerciſes. They are not aware that they are thus training their offspring to an early and a ſyſtematic profanation of the Sabbath by this habit; for to children, their taſks are their buſineſs; to them a French or Latin exerciſe is as ſerious an occupation as the exerciſe of a trade or profeſſion is to a man; and if they are allowed to think the one right *now*, they will not be brought hereafter to think that the other is wrong; for the opinions and practices fixed at this early ſeaſon are not eaſily altered. By this overſight even the friends of religion may be contributing

eventually

eventually to that abolition of the Lord's day, ſo devoutly wiſhed by its enemies, as the deſired preliminary to the deſtruction of whatever is moſt dear to Chriſtians. What obſtruction would it offer to the general progreſs of youth, if all their Sunday exerciſes (which, with reading, compoſing, tranſcribing, and getting by heart, might be extended to an entertaining variety) were adapted to the peculiar nature of the day? It is not meant to impoſe on them ſuch rigorous ſtudy as ſhall convert the day they ſhould be taught to love into a day of burthens and hardſhips, or to abridge their innocent enjoyments; but it is intended merely to ſuggeſt that there ſhould be a marked diſtinction in the nature of their employments and ſtudies; for on the obſervance or neglect of this, as was before obſerved, their future notions and principles will in a good degree be formed. The Goſpel, in reſcuing the Lord's day from the rigorous bondage of the Jewiſh Sabbath, never leſſened the obligation

obligation to keep it holy, nor meant to ſanction any ſecular occupation.

Though the author, chiefly writing with a view to domeſtic inſtruction, has purpoſely avoided entering on the diſputed queſtion, Whether a ſchool or home education be beſt? a queſtion which perhaps muſt generally be decided by the ſtate of the individual home, and the ſtate of the individual ſchool; yet ſhe begs leave to ſuggeſt one remark, which peculiarly belongs to a ſchool education; namely, the general habit of converting the Sunday into a viſiting day by way of gaining time; as if the appropriate inſtructions of the Sunday were the cheapeſt ſacrifice which could be made to pleaſure. Even in thoſe ſchools, in which religion is conſidered as an indiſpenſable part of inſtruction, this kind of inſtruction is almoſt excluſively limited to Sundays: how then are girls ever to make any progreſs in this moſt important article, if they are habituated to loſe the religious advantages of the ſchool,

for

for the ſake of having more dainties for dinner abroad? This remark cannot be ſuppoſed to apply to the viſits which children make to religious parents, and indeed it only applies to thoſe caſes where the ſchool is a conſcientious ſchool, and the viſit a trifling viſit.

Among other ſubjects which engroſs a good ſhare of worldly converſation, one of the moſt attracting is beauty. Many ladies have often a random way of talking rapturouſly on the general importance of beauty, who are yet prudent enough to be very unwilling to let their own daughters find out they are handſome. Perhaps the contrary courſe might be ſafer. If the little liſtener were not conſtantly hearing that beauty is the beſt gift, ſhe would not be ſo vain from fancying herſelf to be the beſt gifted. Be leſs ſolicitous, therefore, to conceal from her a ſecret which with all your watchfulneſs ſhe will be ſure to find out, without your telling;

telling; but rather ſeek to lower the general value of beauty in her eſtimation. Uſe your daughter in all things to a different ſtandard from that of the world. It is not by vulgar people and ſervants only that ſhe will be told of her being pretty. She will be hearing it not only from gay ladies, but from grave men; ſhe will be hearing it from the whole world around her. The antidote to the preſent danger is not now to be ſearched for; it muſt be already operating; it muſt have been provided for in the foundation laid in the general principle ſhe had been imbibing, before this particular temptation of beauty came in queſtion. And this general principle is an habitual indifference to flattery. She muſt have learnt not to be intoxicated by the praiſe of the world. She muſt have learnt to eſtimate things by their intrinſic worth, rather than by the world's eſtimation. Speak to her with particular kindneſs and commendation of plain but amiable girls; mention with compaſſion

compaſſion ſuch as are handſome but ill-educated; ſpeak caſually of ſome who were once thought pretty, but have ceaſed to be good; make uſe of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of beauty, as ſtrong additional reaſons for making that which is little valuable in itſelf, ſtill leſs valuable. As it is a *new* idea which is always dangerous, you may thus break the force of this danger by allowing her an early introduction to this inevitable knowledge, which would become more intereſting and of courſe more perilous by every additional year: and if you can guard againſt that fatal error of letting her ſee that ſhe is more loved on account of her beauty, her familiarity with the idea may be leſs fatal than its novelty afterwards would prove.

But the great and conſtant danger to which young perſons in the higher walks of life are expoſed, is the prevailing turn and ſpirit of general converſation. Even the children of better families, who

are well inſtructed when at their ſtudies, are yet at other times continually beholding the WORLD ſet up in the higheſt and moſt advantageous point of view. Seeing the world! knowing the world! ſtanding well with the world! making a figure in the world! is ſpoken of as including the whole ſum and ſubſtance of human advantages. They hear their education almoſt excluſively alluded to with reference to the *figure* it will enable them to make in the world. In almoſt all companies, they hear all that the world admires ſpoken of with admiration; rank flattered, fame coveted, power ſought, beauty idolized, money conſidered as the one thing needful, and as the atoning ſubſtitute for the want of all other things; profit held up as the reward of virtue, and worldly eſtimation as the juſt and higheſt prize of lawful ambition; and after the very ſpirit of the world has been thus habitually infuſed into them all the week, one cannot expect much effect from their being coldly told

now

now and then on Sundays, that they muſt not "love the world, nor the things of the "World." To tell them once in ſeven days that it is a ſin to gratify an appetite which you have been whetting and ſtimulating the preceding ſix, is to require from them a power of ſelf-control, which our knowledge of the impetuoſity of the paſſions, eſpecially in early age, ſhould have taught us is impoſſible.

This is not the place to animadvert on the uſual miſapplication of the phraſe, "knowing the world;" which term is commonly applied, in the way of panegyric, to keen, deſigning, ſelfiſh, ambitious men, who ſtudy mankind in order to turn it to their own account. But in the true ſenſe of the expreſſion, the ſenſe which Chriſtian parents would wiſh to impreſs on their children, to know the world, is to know its emptineſs, its vanity, its futility, and its wickedneſs. To know it is to deſpiſe it; and in this view, an obſcure Chriſtian in a village may be ſaid to know the

the world better than a hoary courtier or wily politician; for how can they be ſaid to *know* it, who go on to love it, to value it, to be led captive by its allurements, to give their ſoul in exchange for its lying promiſes?

But while ſo falſe an eſtimate is often made in faſhionable ſociety of the real value of things; that is, while Chriſtianity does *not* furniſh the ſtandard, and human opinion *does;* while the multiplying our deſires is conſidered as a ſymptom of elegance, though to ſubdue them is made the grand criterion of religion; while moderation is beheld as indicating a poorneſs of ſpirit, though to that very poverty of ſpirit the higheſt promiſe of the Goſpel is aſſigned; while worldly wiſdom is enjoined by worldly friends, in contradiction to that aſſertion, "that the wiſdom "of the world is fooliſhneſs with God;" while the praiſe of man is to be anxiouſly ſought in oppoſition to that aſſurance, that "the fear of man worketh a ſnare;"

while

while theſe things are ſo, and that they are ſo in a good degree who will deny? may we not venture to affirm that a Chriſtian education, though it be not an impoſſible, is yet a very difficult work?

CHAP. VI.

Filial obedience not the character of the age.—A compariſon with the preceding age in this reſpect.—Thoſe who cultivate the mind adviſed to ſtudy the nature of the ſoil.—Unpromiſing children often make ſtrong characters.—Teachers too apt to devote their pains almoſt excluſively to children of parts.

AMONG the real improvements of modern times, and they are not a few, it is to be feared that the growth of filial obedience cannot be included. Who can forbear obſerving and regretting in a variety of inſtances, that not only ſons but daughters have adopted ſomething of that ſpirit of independence, and diſdain of control which characteriſe the times? And is it not obvious that domeſtic manners are not

ſlightly

ſlightly tinctured with the hue of public principles? The *rights of man* have been diſcuſſed, till we are ſomewhat wearied with the diſcuſſion. To theſe have been oppoſed, with more preſumption than prudence, *the rights of woman.* It follows, according to the natural progreſſion of human things, that the next ſtage of that irradiation which our enlighteners are pouring in upon us will illuminate the world with grave deſcants on the *rights of children.*

This revolutionary ſpirit in families ſuggeſts the remark, that among the faults with which it has been too much the faſhion of recent times to load the memory of the incomparable Milton, one of the charges brought againſt his private character (for with his political character we have here nothing to do) has been, that he was ſo ſevere a father as to have compelled his daughters, after he was blind, to read aloud to him, for his ſole pleaſure, Greek and Latin authors of which they did not

underſtand a word. But this is in fact nothing more than an inſtance of the ſtrict domeſtic regulations of the age in which Milton lived; and ſhould not be brought forward as a proof of the ſeverity of his individual temper. Nor indeed in any caſe ſhould it ever be conſidered as an hardſhip for an affectionate child to amuſe an afflicted parent, even though it ſhould be attended with a heavier ſacrifice of her own pleaſure than in the preſent inſtance *.

Is

* In ſpite of this too prevailing ſpirit, and at a time when, by an inverted ſtate of ſociety, ſacrifices of eaſe and pleaſure are rather expected by children from parents, than required of parents from children, numberleſs inſtances might be adduced of filial affection truly honourable to the preſent period. And the author records with pleaſure, that ſhe has ſeen amiable young ladies of high rank conducting the ſteps of a blind but illuſtrious parent with true filial fondneſs; and has often contemplated, in another family, the intereſting attentions of daughters who were both hands and eyes to an infirm and nearly blind father. It is

but

Is the author then inculcating the harſh doctrine of parental auſterity? By no means. It drives the gentle ſpirit to artifice, and the rugged to deſpair. It generates deceit and cunning, the moſt hopeleſs and hateful in the whole catalogue of female failings. Ungoverned anger in the teacher, and inability to diſcriminate between venial errors and premeditated offence, though they may lead a timid creature to hide wrong tempers, or to conceal bad actions, will not help her to ſubdue the one or correct the other. Severity will drive terrified children to ſeek, not for reformation, but for impunity. A readineſs to forgive them promotes frankneſs. And we ſhould, above all things, encourage them to be frank, in order to come at their faults. They have not more

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but juſtice to add, that theſe examples are not taken from that middle rank of life which Milton filled, but from the daughters of the higheſt officers in the ſtate.

faults for being open, they only *diſcover* more.

Diſcipline, however, is not cruelty, and reſtraint is not ſeverity. We muſt ſtrengthen the feeble, while we repel the bold. We cannot educate by a *receipt*; for after ſtudying the beſt rules, and after digeſting them into a ſyſtem, much muſt depend on contingent circumſtances. The cultivator of the human mind muſt, like the gardener, ſtudy diverſities of ſoil, or he may plant diligently and water faithfully with little fruit. The ſkilful labourer knows that even where the ſurface is not particularly promiſing; there is often a rough ſtrong ground which will amply repay the trouble of breaking it up; yet we are often moſt taken with a ſoft ſurface, though it conceal a ſhallow depth, becauſe it promiſes preſent reward and little trouble. But ſtrong and pertinacious tempers, of which perhaps obſtinacy is the leading vice, under ſkilful management often turn out ſteady and ſterling characters; while

from

from ſofter clay a firm and vigorous virtue is but ſeldom produced.

But theſe revolutions in character cannot be effected by mere education. Plutarch has obſerved that the medical ſcience would never be brought to perfection till poiſons ſhould be converted into phyſic. What our late improvers in natural ſcience have done in the medical world, by converting the moſt deadly ingredients into inſtruments of life and health, Chriſtianity with a ſort of divine alchymy has effected in the moral world, by that tranſmutation which makes thoſe paſſions which have been working for ſin become active in the cauſe of religion. The violent temper of Saul of Tarſus, which was "exceedingly "mad" againſt the ſaints of God, did God ſee fit to convert into that burning zeal which enabled Paul the Apoſtle to labour ſo unremittingly for the converſion of the Gentile world. Chriſtianity indeed does not ſo much give us new affections or faculties,

culties, as give a new direction to thoſe we already have. She changes that ſorrow of the world which worketh death, into "godly ſorrow which worketh repent-"ance." She changes our anger againſt the perſons we diſlike into hatred of their ſins. "The fear of man which worketh "a ſnare," ſhe tranſmutes into "that fear "of God which worketh ſalvation." That religion does not extinguiſh the paſſions, but alters their object, the animated expreſſions of the fervid Apoſtle confirm—"Yea, what *fearfulneſs*; yea, what *clear-*"*ing of yourſelves*; yea, what *indignation*; "yea, what *fear*; yea, what *vehement* "*deſire*; yea, what *zeal*; yea, what "*revenge* *!"

Thus, by ſome of the moſt troubleſome paſſions of our nature being converted by the bleſſing of God on a religious education to the ſide of virtue, a double purpoſe is effected. Becauſe, if I may be allowed to change the metaphor, it is the

* 2 Corinthians, vii. 11.

character

character of the paſſions never to obſerve a neutrality. If they are no longer rebels, they become auxiliaries; and a foe ſubdued is an ally obtained. And it is the effect of religion on the paſſions, that when ſhe ſeizes the enemy's garriſon, ſhe does not content herſelf with defeating its future miſchiefs, ſhe does not deſtroy the works, ſhe does not burn the arſenal and ſpike the cannon; but the artillery ſhe ſeizes, ſhe turns to her own uſe; ſhe attacks in her turn, and plants its whole force againſt the enemy from whom ſhe has taken it.

But while I would deprecate harſhneſs, I would enforce diſcipline; and that not merely on the ground of religion, but of happineſs alſo. One reaſon, not ſeldom brought forward by tender but miſtaken mothers as an apology for their unbounded indulgence, eſpecially to weakly children, is, that they probably will not live to enjoy the world when grown up, and that therefore they would not abridge

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the little pleaſure they may enjoy at preſent. But a ſlight degree of obſervation would prove that this is an error in judgment as well as in principle. For, omitting any conſiderations reſpecting their future welfare, and entering only into their immediate intereſts; it is an indiſputable fact that children who know no control, whoſe faults encounter no contradiction, and whoſe humours experience conſtant indulgence, grow more irritable and capricious, invent wants, create deſires, loſe all reliſh for the pleaſures which they know they may reckon upon; and become perhaps more miſerable than even thoſe unfortunate children who labour under the more obvious and more commiſerated misfortune of ſuffering under the tyranny of unkind parents.

An early habitual reſtraint is peculiarly important to the future character and happineſs of women. A judicious, unrelaxing, but ſteady and gentle curb on their tempers and paſſions can alone enſure their

peace

peace and eſtabliſh their principles. It is a habit which cannot be adopted too ſoon, nor perſiſted in too pertinaciouſly. They ſhould when very young be enured to contradiction. Inſtead of hearing their *bon-mots* treaſured up and repeated to the gueſts till they begin to think it dull, when they themſelves are not the little heroine of the theme, they ſhould be accuſtomed to receive but little praiſe for their vivacity or their wit, though they ſhould receive juſt commendation for their patience, their induſtry, their humility, and other qualities which have more worth than ſplendour. They ſhould be led to diſtruſt their own judgment; they ſhould learn not to murmur at expoſtulation; but ſhould be accuſtomed to expect and to endure oppoſition. It is a leſſon with which the world will not fail to furniſh them; and they will not practiſe it the worſe for having learnt it the ſooner. It is of the laſt importance to their happineſs even in this life that they ſhould early acquire a ſubmiſſive

temper

temper and a forbearing ſpirit. They muſt even endure to be thought wrong ſometimes, when they cannot but feel they are right. And while they ſhould be anxiouſly aſpiring to do well, they muſt not expect always to obtain the praiſe of having done ſo. But while a gentle demeanor is inculcated, let them not be inſtructed to practiſe gentleneſs merely on the low ground of its being decorous, and feminine, and pleaſing, and calculated to attract human favour: but let them be carefully taught to cultivate it on the high principle of obedience to Chriſt; on the practical ground of labouring after conformity to HIM, who, when he propoſed himſelf as a perfect pattern of imitation, did not ſay, Learn of me, for I am great, or wiſe, or mighty, but "Learn of me, for I "am meek and lowly:" and graciouſly promiſed that the reward ſhould accompany the practice, by encouragingly adding, "and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls." Do not teach them humility on the ordinary

nary ground that vanity is *unamiable*, and that no one will *love* them if they are proud; for that will only go to correct the exterior, and make them ſoft and ſmiling hypocrites. But inform them, that "God "reſiſteth the proud," while "them "that are meek he ſhall guide in judg- "ment, and ſuch as are gentle, them ſhall "he teach his way." In theſe, as in all other caſes, an habitual attention to the *motives* ſhould be carefully ſubſtituted in their young hearts, in the place of too much anxiety about the *event* of actions. Principles, aims, and intentions ſhould be invariably inſiſted on, as the only true ground of right practice, and they ſhould be carefully guarded againſt too much ſolicitude for that human praiſe which attaches to appearances as much as to realities, to ſucceſs more than to deſert.

Let me repeat, that it will be of vaſt importance not to let ſlip the earlieſt occaſions of working gentle manners into an habit on their only true foundation, Chriſtian

meekneſs. For this purpoſe I would again urge your calling in the example of our Redeemer in aid of his precepts. Endeavour to make your pupil feel that all the wonders exhibited in his life do not ſo overwhelm the awakened heart with rapture, love, and aſtoniſhment, as the perpetual inſtances of his humility and meekneſs. Stupendous miracles, exerciſes of infinite power prompted by infinite mercy, are actions which we ſhould naturally enough conceive as growing out of the divine perfections: but ſilence under cruel mockings, patience under reproach, gentleneſs of demeanor under unparalleled injuries; theſe are perfections of which unaſſiſted nature not only has no conception in a Divine Being, but at which it would revolt, had not the reality been exemplified by our perfect pattern. Healing the ſick, feeding the multitude, reſtoring the blind, raiſing the dead, are deeds of which we could form ſome adequate idea, as neceſſarily flowing from Almighty good-

goodneſs: but to waſh his diſciples' feet, —to preach the Goſpel to the *poor*,—to renounce not only eaſe, for that heroes have done on human motives,—but to renounce praiſe, to forgive his perſecutors, to love his enemies, to pray for his murderers with his laſt breath;—theſe are things which, while they compel us to cry out with the Centurion, "Truly "this was the Son of God," ſhould remind us alſo, that they are not only *adorable* but *imitable* parts of his character. Theſe are perfections which we are not barely to contemplate with holy awe and diſtant admiration, as if they were reſtricted to the *divine* nature of our Redeemer; but we muſt conſider them as ſuited to the human nature alſo, which he condeſcended to participate; in *contemplating*, we muſt *imitate*; in admiring, we muſt practiſe; and in our meaſure and degree go and do likewiſe. Elevate your thoughts for one moment to this ſtandard, (and never allow yourſelf to be contented

with

with a lower,) and then go, if you can, and teach your children to be mild, and ſoft, and gentle on worldly grounds, on human motives, and as an external attraction.

There is a cuſtom among teachers, which is not the more right for being common; they are apt to beſtow an undue proportion of pains on children of the beſt capacity, as if only geniuſes were worthy of attention. They ſhould reflect that in moderate talents, carefully cultivated, we are perhaps to look for the chief happineſs and virtue of ſociety. If ſuperlative genius had been generally neceſſary, its exiſtence would not have been ſo rare; for Omnipotence could eaſily have made thoſe talents common which we now conſider as extraordinary had they been neceſſary to the perfection of his plan. Beſides, while we are conſcientiouſly inſtructing children of moderate capacity, it is a comfort to reflect, that if no labour will raiſe them to a high degree in the ſcale

of

of intellectual excellence, yet they may be led on to perfection in that road in which "a way-faring man, though ſimple, ſhall "not err." And when a mother feels diſpoſed to repine that her family is not likely to exhibit a groupe of future wits and growing beauties, let her conſole herſelf by looking abroad into the world, where ſhe will quickly perceive that the monopoly of happineſs is not engroſſed by beauty, nor that of virtue by genius.

Perhaps mediocrity of parts was decreed to be the ordinary lot, by way of furniſhing a ſtimulus to induſtry, and ſtrengthening the motives to virtuous application. For is it not obvious that moderate abilities, carefully carried to that meaſure of perfection of which they are capable, often enable their poſſeſſors to outſtrip, in the race of knowledge and of uſefulneſs, their more brilliant but leſs perſevering competitors? It is with mental endowments, as with other rich gifts of Providence; the inhabitant of the luxu-

riant ſouthern clime, where Nature has done every thing in the way of vegetation, indolently lays hold on this very fertility as a plea for doing nothing himſelf; ſo that the ſoil which teems with ſuch encouraging abundance leaves the favoured poſſeſſor idle; while the native of the leſs genial region, ſupplying by his labours the deficiencies of his lot, overtakes his more favoured competitor; by ſubſtituting induſtry for opulence, he improves the riches of his native land beyond that which is bleſſed with warmer ſuns, and thus vindicates Providence from the charge of partial diſtribution.

A girl who has docility will ſeldom be found to want underſtanding ſufficient for all the purpoſes of a uſeful, happy, and a pious life. And it is as wrong for parents to ſet out with too ſanguine a dependence on the figure their children are to make in life, as it is unreaſonable to be diſcouraged at every diſappointment. Want of ſucceſs is ſo far from furniſhing a

motive

motive for relaxing their energy, that it is a reaſon for redoubling it. Let them ſuſpect their own plans, and reform them; let them diſtruſt their own principles, and correct them. The generality of parents do too little; ſome do much, and miſs their reward, becauſe they look not to any ſtrength beyond their own: after much is done, much will remain undone; for the entire regulation of the heart and affections is not the work of education alone, but the operation of divine grace. Will it be accounted enthuſiaſm to ſuggeſt, "that "the fervent effectual prayer of a "righteous *parent* availeth much?" and perhaps the reaſon why ſo many anxious mothers fail of ſucceſs is, becauſe they repoſe with confidence in their own ſkill and labour, without looking to HIM without whoſe bleſſing they do but labour in vain.

On the other hand, is it not to be feared that ſome pious parents have fallen into an error of an oppoſite kind? From a

full conviction that human endeavours are vain, and that it is God alone who can change the heart, they are earneſt in their prayers, but not ſo earneſt in their endeavours. Such parents ſhould be reminded, that if they do not add their exertions to their prayers, their children are not likely to be more benefited than the children of thoſe who do not add their prayers to their exertions. What God has joined let not man preſume to ſeparate. It *is* the work of God, we readily acknowledge, to implant religion in the heart, and to maintain it there as a ruling principle of conduct. And is it not the ſame God which cauſes the corn to grow? Are not our natural lives conſtantly preſerved by his power? Who will deny that in him we live, and move, and have our being? But how are theſe works of God carried on? By *means* which he has appointed. By the labour of the huſbandmen the corn is made to grow: by food the body is ſuſtained: and by

religious

religious inſtruction God is pleaſed to work upon the human heart. As far as *we* ſee of the ways of God, all his works are carried on by *means*. It becomes therefore our duty to uſe the means, and truſt in God; to remember that God will not work without the means; and that the means can effect nothing without his bleſſing. "Paul may plant and Apollos water, "but it is God muſt give the increaſe." But to what does he give the increaſe? To the *exertions* of Paul and Apollos. It is never ſaid, becauſe God only can give the increaſe, that Paul and Apollos may ſpare their labour.

It is one grand object to give the young probationer juſt and ſober views of the world on which ſhe is about to enter. Inſtead of making her boſom bound at the near proſpect of emancipation from her inſtructors; inſtead of teaching her young heart to dance with premature flutterings as the critical winter draws near in which *ſhe is to come out*; inſtead of raiſing a

tumult in her buſy imagination at the approach of her firſt *grown up ball;* endeavour to convince her, that the world will not turn out to be that ſcene of unvarying and never-ending delights which ſhe has perhaps been led to expect, not only from the ſanguine temper and warm ſpirits natural to youth, but from the value ſhe has ſeen put on thoſe ſhowy accompliſhments which have too probably been fitting her for her exhibition in life. Teach her that this world is not a ſtage for the diſplay of ſuperficial or even of ſhining talents, but for the ſtrict and ſober exerciſe of fortitude, temperance, meekneſs, faith, diligence, and ſelf-denial; of her due performance of which Chriſtian graces, Angels will be ſpectators, and God the judge. Teach her that human life is not a ſplendid romance, ſpangled over with brilliant adventures, and enriched with extraordinary occurrences, and diverſified with wonderful incidents; lead her not to expect that it will abound with ſcenes

which

which will call ſhining qualities and great powers into perpetual action; and for which if ſhe acquit herſelf well ſhe will be rewarded with proportionate fame and certain commendation. But apprize her that human life is a true hiſtory, many paſſages of which will be dull, obſcure, and unintereſting; ſome perhaps tragical; but that whatever gay incidents and pleaſing ſcenes may be interſpered in the progreſs of the piece, yet finally "one "event happeneth to all;" to all there is one awful and infallible cataſtrophe. Apprize her that the eſtimation which mankind forms of merit is not always juſt, nor is its praiſe exactly proportioned to deſert; that the world weighs actions in far different ſcales from "the balance of the ſanctuary," and eſtimates worth by a far different ſtandard from that of the goſpel: apprize her that while her pureſt intentions may be ſometimes calumniated, and her beſt actions miſrepreſented, ſhe will be liable to receive commendation on occaſions wherein her

conſcience will tell her ſhe has not deſerved it; and may be extolled by others for actions for which, if ſhe be honeſt, ſhe may condemn herſelf.

Do not however give her a gloomy and diſcouraging picture of the world, but rather ſeek to give her a juſt and ſober view of the part ſhe will have to act in it. And humble the impetuoſity of hope, and cool the ardour of expectation, by explaining to her, that this part, even in her beſt eſtate, will probably conſiſt in a ſucceſſion of petty trials, and a round of quiet duties which, however well performed, though they will make little or no figure in the book of Fame, will prove of vaſt importance to her in that day when *another* "book is opened, and the judgment is ſet, "and every one will be judged according "to the deeds done in the body, whether "they be good or bad."

Say not that theſe juſt and ſober views will cruelly wither her young hopes, and deaden the innocent ſatisfactions of life,

life. It is not true. There is, happily an active ſpring in the mind of youth which bounds with freſh vigour and uninjured elaſticity from any ſuch temporary depreſſion. It is not meant that you ſhould darken her proſpect, ſo much as that you ſhould enlighten her underſtanding to contemplate it. And though her feelings, taſtes, and paſſions, will all be againſt you, if you ſet before her a faithful delineation of life, yet it will be ſomething to get her judgment on your ſide. It is no unkind office to aſſiſt the ſhort view of youth with the aids of long-ſighted experience, to enable them to diſcover ſpots in the brightneſs of that life which dazzles them in proſpect, though it is probable they will after all chooſe to believe their own eyes rather than the offered glaſs.

CHAP. VII.

On female ſtudy, and initiation into knowledge.—Error of cultivating the imagination to the neglect of the judgment.—Books of reaſoning recommended.

As this little work by no means aſſumes the character of a general ſcheme of education, the author has purpoſely avoided expatiating largely on any kind of inſtruction; but ſo far as it is connected, either immediatly or remotely, with objects of a moral or religious nature. Of courſe ſhe has been ſo far from thinking it neceſſary to enter into the enumeration of thoſe books which are uſed in general inſtruction, that ſhe has purpoſely forborne to mention any. With ſuch books the riſing generation is far more copiouſly and ably furniſhed than any preceding period has been;

been; and out of an excellent variety the judicious inſtructor can hardly fail to make ſuch a ſelection as ſhall be beneficial to the pupil.

But while due praiſe ought not to be withheld from the improved methods of communicating the elements of general knowledge; yet is there not ſome danger that our very advantages may lead us into error, by cauſing us to repoſe ſo confidently on the multiplied helps which facilitate the entrance into learning, as to render our pupils ſuperficial through the very facility of acquirement? Where ſo much is done for them, may they not be led to do too little for themſelves? and beſides that exertion may ſlacken for want of a ſpur, may there not be a moral diſadvantage in poſſeſſing them with the notion that learning may be acquired without diligence and without labour? Sound education never *can* be made a "primroſe "path of dalliance." Do what we will, we cannot *cheat* children into learning, or

play

play them into knowledge, according to the ſmoothneſs of the modern creed, and the indolence of modern habits. There is no idle way to any acquiſitions which really deſerve the name. And as Euclid, in order to repreſs the impetuous vanity of greatneſs, told his Sovereign that there was no royal way to geometry, ſo the fond mother may be aſſured that there is no ſhort cut to any other kind of learning. The tree of knowledge, as a puniſhment, perhaps, for its having been at firſt unfairly taſted, cannot now be climbed without difficulty; and this very circumſtance ſerves afterwards to furniſh not only literary pleaſures, but moral advantages: for the knowledge which is acquired by unwearied aſſiduity is laſting in the poſſeſſion, and ſweet to the poſſeſſor; both perhaps in proportion to the coſt and labour of the acquiſition. And though an able teacher ought to endeavour, by improving the communicating faculty in himſelf, (for many know what they cannot teach,) to ſoften every difficulty;

difficulty; yet in ſpite of the kindneſs and ability with which he will ſmooth every obſtruction, it is probably among the wiſe inſtitutions of Providence that great difficulties ſhould ſtill remain. For education is but an initiation into that life of trial to which we are introduced on our entrance into this world. It is the firſt breaking-in to that ſtate of toil and labour to which we are born, and to which ſin has made us liable; and in this view of the ſubject the laborious acquiſition of learning may be converted to higher uſes than ſuch as are purely literary.

Will it not be aſcribed to a captious ſingularity, if I venture to remark that real knowledge and real piety, though they may have gained in many inſtances, have ſuffered in others from that profuſion of little, amuſing, ſentimental books with which the youthful library overflows? Abundance has its dangers as well as ſcarcity. In the firſt place may not the multiplicity of theſe alluring little works

increaſe

increaſe the natural reluctance to thoſe more dry and unintereſting ſtudies, of which, after all, the rudiments of every part of learning *muſt* conſiſt? And, ſecondly, is there not ſome danger (though there are many honourable exceptions) that ſome of thoſe engaging narratives may ſerve to infuſe into the youthful heart a ſort of ſpurious goodneſs, a confidence of virtue, a parade of charity? And that the benevolent actions with the recital of which they abound, when they are not made to flow from any ſource but feeling, may tend to inſpire a ſelf-complacency, a ſelf-gratulation, a "ſtand by, for I am holier than "thou?" May they not help to ſuggeſt a falſe ſtandard of morals, to infuſe a love of popularity and an anxiety for praiſe, in the place of that ſimple and unoſtentatious rule of doing whatever good we do *becauſe it is the will of God?* The univerſal ſubſtitution of this principle would tend to purify the worldly morality of many a popular little ſtory. And there

are few dangers which good parents will more carefully guard againſt than that of giving their children a mere political piety; that ſort of religion which juſt goes to make people more reſpectable, and to ſtand well with the world; a religion which is to ſave appearances without inculcating realities; a religion which affects to "preach peace and "good-will to men," but which forgets to give "glory to God on high *."

There is a certain precocity of mind which is much helped on by theſe ſuperficial modes of inſtruction; for frivolous reading will produce its correſpondent effect, in much leſs time than books

* An ingenious (and in many reſpects uſeful) French Treatiſe on Education has too much encouraged this political piety; by conſidering religion as a thing of human convention, rather than of divine inſtitution; as a thing creditable, rather than commanded: by erecting the doctrine of expediency in the place of Chriſtian ſimplicity; and wearing away the ſpirit of truth, by the ſubſtitution of occaſional deceit, equivocation, ſubterfuge, and mental reſervation.

of

of ſolid inſtruction; the imagination being liable to be worked upon, and the feelings to be ſet a-going, much faſter than the underſtanding can be opened and the judgment enlightened. A talent for converſation ſhould be the reſult of education, not its precurſor; it is a golden fruit when ſuffered to ripen gradually on the tree of knowledge; but if forced in the hot-bed of a circulating library, it will turn out worthleſs and vapid in proportion as it was artificial and premature. Girls who have been accuſtomed to devour frivolous books, will converſe and write with a far greater appearance of ſkill as to ſtyle and ſentiment at twelve or fourteen years old, than thoſe of a more advanced age who are under the diſcipline of ſeverer ſtudies; but the former having early attained to that low ſtandard which had been held out to them, become ſtationary; while the latter, quietly progreſſive, are paſſing through juſt gradations to a higher ſtrain of mind; and thoſe who

who early begin with talking and writing like women, commonly end with thinking and acting like children.

The irregular fancy of women is not ſufficiently ſubdued by early application, nor tamed by labour, and the kind of knowledge they commonly do acquire is eaſily attained: and being chiefly an acquiſition of the memory, ſomething which is given them to get off by themſelves, and not grounded in their minds by comment and converſation, it is eaſily loſt. The ſuperficial *queſtion*-and-*anſwer*-way, for inſtance, in which they often learn hiſtory, furniſhes the mind with little to lean on: the events being detached and ſeparated, the actions having no links to unite them with each other, the characters not being interweaved by mutual relation, the chronology being reduced to diſconnected dates, inſtead of preſenting an unbroken ſeries; of courſe, neither events, actions, characters, nor chronology, faſten themſelves on the underſtanding, but rather float in the

memory than contribute to form the mind of the reader, or enrich his judgment in the important ſcience of men and manners.

The ſwarms of *Abridgments*, *Beauties*, and *Compendiums*, which form too conſiderable a part of a young lady's library, may be conſidered in many inſtances as an infallible receipt for making a ſuperficial mind. The *names* of the renowned characters in hiſtory thus become familiar in the mouths of thoſe who can neither attach to the ideas of the perſon, the ſeries of his actions nor the peculiarities of his character. A few fine paſſages from the poets (paſſages perhaps which derived their chief beauty from their poſition and connexion) are huddled together by ſome extract-maker, whoſe brief and diſconnected patches of broken and diſcordant materials, while they inflame young readers with the vanity of reciting, neither fill the mind nor form the taſte: and it is not difficult to trace back to their ſhallow ſources the hackneyed quotations of certain

tain *accompliſhed* young ladies, who will be frequently found not to have come legitimately by any thing they know: I mean, not to have drawn it from its true ſpring, the original works of the author from which ſome *beauty-monger* has ſevered it. Human inconſiſtency in this, as in other caſes, wants to combine two irreconcileable things; it ſtrives to unite the reputation of knowledge with the pleaſures of idleneſs, forgetting that nothing that is valuable can be obtained without ſacrifices, and that if we would purchaſe knowledge we muſt pay for it the fair and lawful price of time and induſtry. For this extract-reading, while it accommodates itſelf to the convenience, illuſtrates the character of the age in which we live. The appetite for pleaſure, and that love of eaſe and indolence which is generated by it, leave little time or taſte for ſound improvement; while the vanity, which is equally a characteriſtic of the exiſting period, puts in its claim alſo for indul-

gence, and contrives to figure away by theſe little ſnatches of reading, caught in the ſhort intervals of ſucceſſive amuſements.

Beſides, the taſte, thus pampered with delicious morſels, is early vitiated. The young reader of theſe *cluſtered beauties* conceives a diſreliſh for every thing which is plain, and grows impatient if obliged to get through thoſe equally neceſſary though leſs ſhowy parts of a work, in which perhaps the author gives the beſt proof of his judgment by keeping under that occaſional brilliancy and incidental ornament, of which theſe ſuperficial ſtudents are in conſtant purſuit. In all well-written books there is much that is good which is not dazzling; and theſe ſhallow critics ſhould be taught, that it is for the embelliſhment of the more tame and unintereſting parts of his work, that the judicious poet commonly reſerves thoſe flowers, whoſe beauty is defaced when they are plucked from the garland into which he had ſo ſkilfully woven them.

The remark, however, as far as it relates to abridgments, is by no means of general application; there are many valuable works which from their bulk would be almoſt inacceſſible to a great number of readers, and a conſiderable part of which may not be generally uſeful. Even in the beſt written books there is often ſuperfluous matter; authors are apt to get enamoured of their ſubject, and to dwell too long on it: every perſon cannot find time to read a longer work on any ſubject, and yet it may be well for them to know ſomething on almoſt every ſubject; thoſe, therefore who abridge voluminous works judiciouſly, render ſervice to the community. But there ſeems, if I may venture the remark, to be a miſtake in the *uſe* of abridgments. They are put ſyſtematically into the hands of *youth*, who have, or ought to have, leiſure for the works at large; while abridgments ſeem more immediately calculated for perſons in more

advanced life, who wiſh to recall ſomething they had forgotten; who want to reſtore old ideas rather than acquire new ones; or they are uſeful for perſons immerſed in the buſineſs of the world, who have little leiſure for voluminous reading. They are excellent to refreſh the mind, but not competent to form it.

Perhaps there is ſome analogy between the mental and bodily conformation of women. The inſtructor therefore ſhould imitate the phyſician. If the latter preſcribe bracing medicines for a body of which delicacy is the diſeaſe, the former would do well to prohibit relaxing reading for a mind which is already of too ſoft a texture, and ſhould ſtrengthen its feeble tone by invigorating reading.

By ſoftneſs, I cannot be ſuppoſed to mean imbecility of underſtanding, but natural ſoftneſs of heart, and pliancy of temper, together with that indolence of ſpirit which is foſtered by indulging in

ſeducing books, and in the general habits of faſhionable life.

I mean not here to recommend books which are immediately religious, but ſuch as exerciſe the reaſoning faculties, teach the mind to get acquainted with its own nature, and to ſtir up its own powers. Let not a timid young lady ſtart if I ſhould venture to recommend to her after a proper courſe of preparation, to ſwallow and digeſt ſuch ſtrong meat as Watts's or Duncan's little book of Logic, ſome parts of Mr. Locke's Eſſay on the Human Underſtanding, and Biſhop Butler's Analogy. Where there is leiſure, and capacity, and an able friend to comment and to counſel, works of this nature might be profitably ſubſtituted in the place of ſo much Engliſh Sentiment, French Philoſophy, Italian Love-Songs, and fantaſtic German imagery and magic wonders. While ſuch enervating or abſurd books ſadly diſqualify the reader for ſolid purſuit or vigorous thinking, the ſtudies here recommended would

act upon the conſtitution of the mind as a kind of alterative, and, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, would help to brace the intellectual ſtamina.

This is however by no means intended to exclude works of taſte and imagination, which muſt always make the ornamental part, and of courſe a very conſiderable part, of female ſtudies. It is only ſuggeſted, that they ſhould not form them entirely and excluſively. For what is called dry tough reading, independent of the knowledge it conveys, is uſeful as an habit, and wholeſome as an exerciſe. Serious ſtudy ſerves to harden the mind for more trying conflicts; it lifts the reader from ſenſation to intellect; it abſtracts her from the world and its vanities; it fixes a wandering ſpirit, and fortifies a weak one; it divorces her from matter; it corrects that ſpirit of trifling which ſhe naturally contracts from the frivolous turn of female converſation, and the petty nature of female employments; it concentrates

trates her attention, aſſiſts her in a habit of excluding trivial thoughts, and thus even helps to qualify her for religious purſuits. Yes, I repeat it, there is to woman a Chriſtian uſe to be made of ſober ſtudies; while books of an oppoſite caſt, however unexceptionable they may be ſometimes found in point of expreſſion, however free from evil in its more groſs and palpable ſhapes, yet from their very nature and conſtitution they excite a ſpirit of relaxation, by exhibiting ſcenes and ſuggeſting ideas which ſoften the mind and ſet the fancy at work; they take off reſtraint, diminiſh ſober-mindedneſs, impair the general powers of reſiſtance, and at beſt feed habits of improper indulgence, and nouriſh a vain and viſionary indolence, which lays the mind open to error and the heart to ſeduction.

Women are little accuſtomed to cloſe reaſoning on any ſubject; ſtill leſs do they enure their minds to conſider particular parts of a ſubject; they are not habituated to turn a truth round, and view it in all its

varied

varied aſpects and poſitions; and this perhaps is one cauſe (as will be obſerved in another * place) of the too great confidence they are diſpoſed to place in their own opinions. Though their imagination is already too lively, and their judgment naturally incorrect; in educating them we go on to ſtimulate the imagination, while we neglect the regulation of the judgment. They already want ballaſt, and we make their education conſiſt in continually crowding more ſail than they can carry. Their intellectual powers being ſo little ſtrengthened by exerciſe, makes every little buſineſs appear a hardſhip to them: whereas ſerious ſtudy would be uſeful, were it only that it leads the mind to the habit of conquering difficulties. But it is peculiarly hard to turn at once from the indolent repoſe of light reading, from the concerns of mere animal life, the objects of ſenſe, or the frivoloufneſs of

* Chapter on Converſation.

chit

chit chat; it is peculiarly hard, I ſay, to a mind ſo ſoftened, to reſcue itſelf from the dominion of ſelf-indulgence, to reſume its powers, to call home its ſcattered ſtrength, to ſhut out every foreign intruſion, to force back a ſpring ſo unnaturally bent, and to devote itſelf to religious reading, to active buſineſs, to ſober reflection, to ſelf-examination: whereas to an intellect accuſtomed to think at all, the difficulty of thinking ſeriouſly is obviouſly leſſened.

Far be it from me to deſire to make ſcholaſtic ladies or female dialecticians; but there is little fear that the kind of books here recommended, if thoroughly ſtudied, and not ſuperficially ſkimmed, will make them pedants or induce conceit; for by ſhewing them the poſſible powers of the human mind, you will bring them to ſee the littleneſs of their own; and to get acquainted with the mind, and to regulate and inform it, and to ſhew it its own ignorance, does not ſeem the way to puff it up. But let her who is diſpoſed to be elated

with

with her literary acquiſitions, check her vanity by calling to mind the juſt remark of Swift, "that after all her boaſted ac-"quirements, a woman will, generally "ſpeaking, be found to poſſeſs leſs of "what is called learning than a common "ſchool-boy."

Neither is there any fear that this ſort of reading will convert ladies into authors. The direct contrary effect will be likely to be produced by the peruſal of writers who throw the generality of readers at ſuch an unapproachable diſtance as to check preſumption, inſtead of exciting it. Who are thoſe ever multiplying authors, that with unparalleled fecundity are overſtocking the world with their quick-ſucceeding progeny? They are NOVEL-WRITERS; the eaſineſs of whoſe productions is at once the cauſe of their own fruitfulneſs, and of the almoſt infinitely numerous race of imitators to whom they give birth. Such is the frightful facility of this ſpecies of compoſition, that every raw girl, while ſhe reads, is

tempted

tempted to fancy that ſhe can alſo write. And as Alexander, on peruſing the Iliad, found by congenial ſympathy the image of Achilles ſtamped on his own ardent ſoul, and felt himſelf the hero he was ſtudying; and as Corregio, on firſt beholding a picture which exhibited the perfection of the graphic art, prophetically felt all his own future greatneſs, and cried out in rapture, "And I too am a painter!" ſo a thorough-paced novel-reading Miſs, at the cloſe of every tiſſue of hackney'd adventures, feels within herſelf the ſtirring impulſe of correſponding genius, and triumphantly exclaims, "And I too am an author!" The glutted imagination ſoon overflows with the redundance of cheap ſentiment and plentiful incident, and by a ſort of arithmetical proportion, is enabled by the peruſal of any three novels, to produce a fourth; till every freſh production, like the progeny of Banquo, is followed by

Another, and another, and another!

Is

Is a lady, however deſtitute of talents, education, or knowledge of the world, whoſe ſtudies have been completed by a circulating library, in any diſtreſs of mind? the writing a novel ſuggeſts itſelf as the beſt ſoother of her ſorrows! Does ſhe labour under any depreſſion of circumſtances? writing a novel occurs as the readieſt receipt for mending them! And ſhe ſolaces her imagination with the conviction that the ſubſcription which has been extorted by her importunity, or given to her neceſſities, has been offered as an homage to her genius. And this confidence inſtantly levies a freſh contribution for a ſucceeding work. Capacity and cultivation are ſo little taken into the account, that writing a book ſeems to be now conſidered as the only ſure reſource which the idle and the illiterate have always in their power.

May the Author be indulged in a ſhort digreſſion while ſhe remarks, though rather out of its place, that the corruption occaſioned

ſioned by theſe books has ſpread ſo wide, and deſcended ſo low, as to have become one of the moſt univerſal as well as moſt pernicious ſources of corruption among us. Not only among milliners, mantua-makers, and other trades where numbers work together, the labour of one girl is frequently ſacrificed that ſhe may be ſpared to read thoſe miſchievous books to the others; but ſhe has been aſſured by clergymen who have witneſſed the fact, that they are procured and greedily read in the wards of our Hoſpitals! an awful hint, that thoſe who teach the poor to read, ſhould not only take care to furniſh them with principles which will lead them to abhor corrupt books, but that they ſhould alſo furniſh them with ſuch books as ſhall ſtrengthen and confirm their principles *. And let every

* The above facts furniſh no argument on the ſide of thoſe who would keep the poor in ignorance. Thoſe who cannot *read* can *hear*, and are likely to hear to worſe purpoſe than thoſe who have been better taught. And that ignorance furniſhes no ſecurity

every Chriſtian remember, that there is no other way of entering truly into the ſpirit of that divine prayer, which petitions that the name of God may be "hallowed," that "his kingdom (of grace) may come," and that "his will may be done on earth as it "is in heaven," than by each individual contributing according to his meaſure to accompliſh the work for which he prays; for to pray that theſe great objects may be promoted, without contributing to their promotion by our exertions, our money, and our influence, is a palpable inconſiſtency.

ſecurity for integrity either in morals or politics, the late revolts in more than one country, remarkable for the ignorance of the poor, fully illuſtrate. It is earneſtly hoped that the above facts may tend to impreſs ladies with the importance of ſuperintending the inſtruction of the poor, and of making it an indiſpenſable part of their charity to give them moral and religious books.

CHAP. VIII.

On the religious and moral uſe of hiſtory and geography.

BUT while every ſort of uſeful knowledge ſhould be carefully imparted to young perſons, it ſhould be imparted not merely for its own ſake, but alſo for the ſake of its ſubſerviency to higher things. All human learning ſhould be taught, not as an end, but a means; and in this view even a leſſon of hiſtory or geography may be converted into a leſſon of religion. In the ſtudy of hiſtory, the inſtructor will accuſtom the pupil not merely to ſtore her memory with facts and anecdotes, and to aſcertain dates and epochas; but ſhe will accuſtom her alſo to trace effects to their cauſes, to examine the ſecret ſprings of action, and accurately to

obſerve the operation of the paſſions. It is only meant to notice here ſome few of the moral benefits which may be derived from a judicious peruſal of hiſtory; and from among other points of inſtruction, I ſelect the following:

The ſtudy of hiſtory may ſerve to give a clearer inſight into the corruption of human nature:

It may ſhow the *plan* of Providence in the direction of events, and in the uſe of unworthy inſtruments:

It may aſſiſt in the *vindication* of Providence, in the common failure of virtue and the ſucceſs of vice:

It may lead to a diſtruſt of our own judgment:

It may contribute to our improvement in ſelf-knowledge.

But to prove to the pupil the important doctrine of human corruption from the ſtudy of hiſtory, will require a truly Chriſtian commentator; for, from the low ſtandard of right eſtabliſhed by the generality

rality of hiſtorians, who erect ſo many perſons into good characters who fall ſhort of the true idea of Chriſtian virtue, the unaſſiſted reader will be liable to form very imperfect views of what is real goodneſs; and will conclude, as his author ſometimes does, that the true idea of human nature is to be taken from the medium between his beſt and his worſt characters; without acquiring a juſt notion of that prevalence of evil, which, in ſpite of thoſe few brighter luminaries that here and there juſt ſerve to gild the gloom of hiſtory, tends abundantly to eſtabliſh the doctrine. It will indeed be continually eſtabliſhing itſelf by thoſe who, in peruſing the hiſtory of mankind, carefully mark the riſe and progreſs of ſin, from the firſt timid irruption of an evil thought, to the fearleſs accompliſhment of the abhorred crime in which that thought has ended: from the indignant queſtion, "Is thy ſervant a dog "that he ſhould do this great thing *?"

* 2 Kings, viii. 13.

to the perpetration of that very enormity of which he could not endure the ſlighteſt ſuggeſtion.

In this connection may it not be obſerved, that young perſons ſhould be put on their guard againſt a too implicit belief in the flattering accounts which ſome voyage-writers are fond of exhibiting of the virtue, amiableneſs, and benignity of ſome of the countries newly diſcovered by our circumnavigators, the ſuperior goodneſs aſcribed to the Hindoos, and particularly the account of the inhabitants of the Pellew Iſlands? Theſe laſt indeed have been almoſt repreſented as having eſcaped the univerſal taint of our common nature, and would ſeem by their purity to have ſprung from another anceſtor than Adam.

One cannot forbear ſuſpecting that theſe pleaſing but ſomewhat overcharged portraits of man, in his natural ſtate, are drawn with the invidious deſign, by counteracting the doctrine of human corruption,

corruption, to degrade the value and even deſtroy the neceſſity of the Chriſtian religion. That in countries profeſſing Chriſtianity, very many are not Chriſtians will be too readily granted. Yet, to ſay nothing of the vaſt ſuperiority of goodneſs in the lives of thoſe who are really governed by Chriſtianity, is there not ſomething even in her reflex light which guides to greater purity many of thoſe who do not profeſs to walk by it? I doubt much, if numbers of the unbelievers of a Chriſtian country, from the ſounder views and better habits derived incidentally and collaterally, as it were, from the influence of a Goſpel, the truth of which however they do not acknowledge, would not ſtart at many of the actions which theſe *heathen perfectioniſts* daily commit without heſitation.

The religious reader of general hiſtory will obſerve the controlling hand of Providence in the direction of events, and in turning the moſt unworthy actions and

inſtruments to the accompliſhment of his own purpoſes. She will mark infinite Wiſdom directing what appears to be caſual occurrences, to the completion of his own plan. She will point out how cauſes ſeemingly the moſt unconnected, events ſeemingly the moſt unpromiſing, circumſtances ſeemingly the moſt incongruous, are all working together for ſome final good. She will mark how national as well as individual crimes are often overruled to ſome hidden purpoſe far different from the intention of the actors: how Omnipotence can and often does bring about the beſt purpoſes by the worſt inſtruments: how the bloody and unjuſt conqueror is but "the rod of His wrath," to puniſh or to purify his offending children: how "the fury of the oppreſſor," and the ſufferings of the oppreſſed, will one day vindicate His righteous dealings. She will unfold to the leſs enlightened reader, how infinite Wiſdom often mocks the inſignificance of human greatneſs, and the

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ſhallowneſs of human ability, by ſetting aſide inſtruments the moſt powerful, while He works by agents comparatively contemptible. But ſhe will carefully guard this doctrine of Divine Providence, thus working out his own purpoſes through the ſins of his creatures, and by the inſtrumentality of the wicked, by calling to mind, while the offender is but a tool in the hands of the great Artificer, "the woe "denounced againſt him by whom the of-"fence cometh!" She will explain how thoſe mutations and revolutions in ſtates which appear to us ſo unaccountable, and how thoſe operations of Providence which ſeem to us ſo entangled and complicated, all move harmoniouſly and in perfect order: that there is not an event but has its commiſſion; not a misfortune which breaks its allotted rank; not a trial which moves out of its appointed track. While calamities and crimes ſeem to fly in caſual confuſion, all is commanded or permitted; all is under the control of a wiſdom which

cannot err, of a goodneſs which cannot do wrong.

To explain my meaning by a few inſtances. When the ſpirit of the youthful reader riſes in honeſt indignation at that hypocritical piety which divorced an unoffending Queen to make way for the lawful crime of our eighth Henry's marriage with Ann Boleyn; and when that indignation is increaſed by the more open profligacy which brought about the execution of the latter; the inſtructor will not loſe ſo fair an occaſion for unfolding how in the councils of the Moſt High the crimes of the King were overruled to the happineſs of the country; and how, to this inauſpicious marriage, from which the heroic Elizabeth ſprang, the Proteſtant religion owed its firm ſtability.

She will explain to her, how even the conqueſts of ambition, after having deluged a land with blood, and involved the perpetrator in guilt, and the innocent victim in ruin, may yet be made the inſtruments of

opening

opening to future generations the way to commerce, to civilization, to Chriſtianity. She may remind her, as they are following Cæſar in his invaſion of Britain, that whereas the conqueror fancied he was only gratifying his own inordinate ambition, extending the flight of the Roman Eagle, immortalizing his own name, and proving that "this world was made for Cæſar;" he was in reality becoming the effectual though unconſcious inſtrument of leading a land of barbarians to civilization and to ſcience; and was in fact preparing an iſland of Pagans to embrace the religion of Chriſt. She will inform her, that when the above-named victorious nation had made Judea a Roman province, and the Jews had become their tributaries, the Romans did not know, nor did the indignant Jews ſuſpect, that this circumſtance was operating to the confirmation of an event the moſt important the world ever ſaw.

For when "Auguſtus ſent forth a decree "that all the world ſhould be taxed;"

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he vainly thought he was only enlarging his own imperial power, whereas he was acting in unconſcious ſubſervience to the decree of a higher Sovereign, and was helping to aſcertain by a public act the exact period of Chriſt's birth, and furniſhing a record of his extraction from that family from which it was predicted by a long line of Prophets that he ſhould ſpring. Herod's atrocious murder of the innocents has added an additional circumſtance for the confirmation of *our* faith; the incredulity of Thomas has ſtrengthened our belief; nay, the treachery of Judas, and the injuſtice of Pilate, were the human inſtruments employed for the ſalvation of the world.

The youth that is not armed with Chriſtian principles, will be tempted to mutiny not only againſt the juſtice, but the very exiſtence of a ſuperintending Providence, in contemplating thoſe frequent inſtances which occur in hiſtory of the ill ſucceſs of the more virtuous cauſe,

and the prosperity of the wicked. He will see with astonishment that it is Rome which triumphs, while Carthage, which had clearly the better cause, falls. Now and then indeed a Cicero prevails, and a Cataline is subdued: but often, it is Cæsar successful against the somewhat juster pretensions of Pompey, and against the still clearer cause of Cato. It is Octavius who triumphs, and it is over Brutus that he triumphs! It is Tiberius that is enthroned, while Germanicus falls!

Thus his faith in a righteous Providence at first view is staggered, and he is ready to say, "Surely it is not God that governs "the earth!" But on a fuller consideration, (and here the suggestions of a Christian instructor are peculiarly wanted,) there will appear great wisdom in this very confusion of vice and virtue; for it is calculated to send one's thoughts forward to a world of retribution, the principle of retribution being so imperfectly established in this. It is indeed so far common for virtue to have the advantage here,

here, in point of happineſs at leaſt, though not of glory, that the courſe of Providence is ſtill calculated to prove that God is on the ſide of virtue; but ſtill, virtue is ſo often unſucceſsful, that clearly the God of virtue, in order that his work may be perfect, muſt have in reſerve a world of retribution. This confuſed ſtate of things therefore is juſt that ſtate which is moſt of all calculated to confirm the deeply conſiderate mind in the belief of a future ſtate: for if all were even here, or very nearly ſo, ſhould we not ſay, "Juſtice is already ſatisfied, "and there *needs* no other world?" On the other hand, if vice always triumphed, ſhould we not then be ready to argue in favour of vice rather than virtue, and to *wiſh* for no other world?

It ſeems ſo very important to ground young perſons in the belief that they will not inevitably meet in this world with reward and ſucceſs according to their merit, but to habituate them to expect even the moſt virtuous attempts to be often, though not always diſappointed, that I am in danger

of

of tautology on this point. This fact is precisely what history teaches. The truth should be plainly told to the young reader; and the antidote to that evil, which mistaken and worldly people would expect to arise from divulging this discouraging doctrine, is *faith*. The importance of faith therefore, and the necessity of it to real, unbending, and persevering virtue, is surely made plain by profane history itself. For the same thing which happens to states and kings, happens to private life and to individuals. Thus there is scarcely a page, even of Pagan history, which may not be made instrumental to the establishing of the truth of revelation: and it is only by such a mode of instruction that some of the evils of the study of ancient literature can be obviated.

Distrust and diffidence in our own judgment seems to be also an important instruction to be learnt from history. How contrary to all expectation do the events therein recorded commonly turn out? and

yet

yet we proceed to foretel this and that event from the appearances of things under our own obſervation, with the ſame arrogant certainty as if we had never been warned by the monitory annals of mankind.

There is ſcarcely one great event in hiſtory which does not, in the iſſue, produce effects upon which human foreſight could never have calculated. The ſucceſs of Auguſtus againſt his country produced peace in many diſtant provinces, who thus ceaſed to be haraſſed and tormented by this oppreſſive republic. Could this effect have been foreſeen, it might have ſobered the deſpair of Cato, and checked the vehemence of Brutus. In politics, in ſhort in every thing except in morals and religion, all is, to a conſiderable degree, uncertain. This reaſoning is not meant to ſhew that Cato ought not to have *fought*, but that he ought not to have *deſponded* even after the laſt battle; and certainly, even upon his own principles, ought not to have killed himſelf. It would be departing too much

from

from my object to apply this argument, however obvious the application, againſt thoſe who were driven to unreaſonable diſtruſt and deſpair by the late ſucceſſes of a neighbouring nation.

But all knowledge will be comparatively of little value, if we neglect ſelf-knowledge; and of ſelf-knowledge hiſtory and biography may be made ſucceſsful vehicles. It will be to little purpoſe that our pupils become accurate critics on the characters of others, while they remain ignorant of themſelves; for while to thoſe who exerciſe a habit of ſelf-application a book of profane hiſtory may be made an inſtrument of improvement in this difficult ſcience; ſo without this habit the Bible itſelf may, in this view, be read with little profit.

It will be to no purpoſe that the reader weeps over the fortitude of the Chriſtian hero, or the conſtancy of the martyr, if ſhe do not bear in mind that ſhe herſelf is called to endure her own common trials with

with ſomething of the ſame temper: if ſhe do not bear in mind that, to control irregular humours, and to ſubmit to the daily vexations of life, will require, though in a lower degree, the exertion of the ſame principle, and ſupplication for the aid of the ſame ſpirit which ſuſtained the Chriſtian hero in the trying conflicts of life, or the martyr in his agony at the ſtake.

May I be permitted to ſuggeſt a few inſtances, by way of ſpecimen, how both ſacred and common hiſtory may tend to promote ſelf-knowledge? And let me again remind the warm admirer of ſuffering piety under extraordinary trials, that if ſhe now fail in the petty occaſions to which ſhe is actually called out, ſhe would not be likely to have ſtood in thoſe more trying occaſions which excite her admiration.

While ſhe is applauding the ſelf-denying ſaint who renounced his eaſe, or choſe to embrace death, rather than violate his duty, let her aſk herſelf if ſhe has never

refuſed to ſubmit to the paltry inconvenience of giving up her company, or even altering her dinner-hour on a Sunday, though by this trifling ſacrifice her family might have been enabled to attend the public worſhip in the afternoon.

While ſhe reads with horror that Belſhazzar was rioting with his thouſand nobles at the very moment when the Perſian army was burſting through the brazen gates of Babylon; is ſhe very ſure that ſhe herſelf, in an almoſt equally imminent moment of public danger, has not been nightly indulging in every ſpecies of diſſipation?

When ſhe is deploring the inconſiſtency of the human heart, while ſhe contraſts Mark Anthony's bravery and contempt of eaſe at one period, with his licentious indulgences at another; or while ſhe laments over the intrepid ſoul of Cæſar, whom ſhe had been following in his painful marches, or admiring in his contempt of death, diſſolved in diſſolute pleaſures

with the enſnaring Queen of Egypt; let her examine whether ſhe herſelf has never, though in a much lower degree, evinced ſomething of the ſame inconſiſtency? whether ſhe who lives perhaps an orderly, ſober, and reaſonable life during her ſummer reſidence in the country, does not plunge with little ſcruple in the winter into all the moſt extravagant pleaſures of the capital? whether ſhe never carries about with her an accommodating kind of religion, which can be made to bend to places and ſeaſons, to climates and cuſtoms; which takes its tincture from the faſhion without, and not its habits from the principle within; which is decent with the pious, ſober with the orderly, and looſe with the licentious?

While ſhe is admiring the generoſity of Alexander in giving away kingdoms and provinces, let her, in order to aſcertain whether ſhe could imitate this magnanimity, take heed if ſhe herſelf is daily ſeizing all the little occaſions of doing good,

which

which every day preſents to the affluent? *Her* call is not to ſacrifice a province; but does ſhe ſacrifice an opera ticket? She who is not doing all the good ſhe can under her preſent circumſtances, would not do all ſhe foreſees ſhe could, in imaginary ones, were her power enlarged to the extent of her wiſhes.

While ſhe is inveighing with patriotic indignation, that in a neighbouring metropolis thirty theatres were open every night in time of war and public calamity, is ſhe very clear, that in a metropolis which contains only three, ſhe was not almoſt conſtantly at one of them in time of war and public calamity alſo? For though in a national view it may make a wide difference whether there be in the capital three theatres or thirty, yet, as the ſame perſon can only go to one of them at once, it makes but little difference as to the quantum of diſſipation in the individual. She who rejoices at ſucceſsful virtue in a hiſtory, or at the proſperity of a perſon

whoſe intereſts do not interfere with her own, may exerciſe her ſelf-knowledge, by examining whether ſhe rejoices equally at the happineſs of every one about her; and let her remember ſhe does not rejoice at it in the true ſenſe, if ſhe does not labour to promote it. She who glows with rapture at a virtuous character in hiſtory, ſhould aſk her own heart, whether ſhe is equally ready to do juſtice to the fine qualities of her acquaintance, though ſhe may not particularly love them; and whether ſhe takes unfeigned pleaſure in the ſuperior talents, virtues, fame, and fortune of thoſe whom ſhe profeſſes to love, though ſhe is eclipſed by them?

* * * * * * *

In like manner, in the ſtudy of geography and natural hiſtory, the attention ſhould be habitually turned to the goodneſs of Providence, who commonly adapts the various productions of climates to the peculiar

peculiar wants of the reſpective inhabitants. To illuſtrate my meaning by one or two inſtances out of a thouſand. The reader may be led to admire the conſiderate goodneſs of Providence in having cauſed the ſpiry fir, whoſe ſlender foliage does not obſtruct the beams of the ſun, to grow in the dreary regions of the North, whoſe ſhivering inhabitants could ſpare none of its ſcanty rays; while in the torrid zone, the palm-tree, the plantane, and the banana, ſpread their umbrella leaves to break the almoſt intolerable fervors of a vertical ſun. How the camel, who is the ſole carrier of all the merchandiſe of Turkey, Perſia, Egypt, Arabia, and Barbary, who is obliged to tranſport his incredible burthens through countries in which paſture is ſo rare, can ſubſiſt twenty-four hours without food, and can travel, loaded, many days without water, through dry and duſty deſerts, which ſupply none; and all this, not from the habit but from the conformation of the animal: for Na-

turaliſts make this conformity of powers to climates a rule of judgment in aſcertaining the native countries of animals, and always determine it to be that to which their powers and properties are moſt appropriate.

Thus the writers of natural hiſtory are perhaps unintentionally magnifying the operations of Providence, when they inſiſt that animals do not modify and give way to the influence of other climates; but here they too commonly ſtop; neglecting, or perhaps refuſing, to aſcribe to infinite goodneſs this wiſe and merciful accommodation; and here the pious inſtructor will come in, in aid of their deficiency: for Philoſophers too ſeldom trace up cauſes, and wonders, and bleſſings to their Author. And it is peculiarly to be regretted that a late juſtly celebrated French Naturaliſt, who, though not famous for his accuracy, poſſeſſed ſuch diverſified powers of deſcription that he had the talent of making the drieſt ſubjects intereſting; together

with ſuch a livelineſs of delineation, that his characters of animals are drawn with a ſpirit and variety rather to be looked for in an hiſtorian of men than of beaſts: it is to be regretted that this writer, with all his excellencies, is abſolutely inadmiſſible into the library of a young lady, both on account of his immodeſty and his impiety; and if, in wiſhing to exclude him, it may be thought wrong to have given him ſo much commendation, it is only meant to ſhow that the author is not led to reprobate his principles from inſenſibility to his talents. The remark is rather made to put the reader on remembering that no brilliancy of genius, no diverſity of attainments, ſhould ever be allowed as a commutation for defective principles and corrupt ideas *.

* Goldſmith's Hiſtory of animated Nature has many references to a Divine Author. It is to be wiſhed that ſome judicious perſon would publiſh a new edition of this work, purified from the indelicate and offenſive parts.

CHAP. IX.

On the uſe of definitions, and the moral benefits of accuracy in language.

"PERSONS having been accuſtomed from "their cradles to learn words before they "knew the ideas for which they ſtand, "uſually continue to do ſo all their lives, "never taking the pains to ſettle in their "minds the determined ideas which be- "long to them. This want of a preciſe "ſignification in their words, when they "come to reaſon, *eſpecially in moral "matters*, is the cauſe of very obſcure and "uncertain notions. They uſe theſe un- "determined words confidently, without "much troubling their heads about a "certain fixed meaning, whereby, beſides "the eaſe of it, they obtain this advantage, "that as in ſuch diſcourſe they are ſeldom

"in

"in the right, ſo they are as ſeldom to be "convinced that they are in the wrong, it "being juſt the ſame to go about to draw "thoſe perſons out of their miſtakes, who "have no ſettled notions, as to diſpoſſeſs "a vagrant of his habitation who has no "ſettled abode.——The chief end of lan-"guage being to be underſtood, words "ſerve not for that end when they do not "excite in the hearer the ſame idea which "they ſtand for in the mind of the "ſpeaker*."

I have choſen to ſhelter myſelf under the broad ſanction of the great Author here quoted, with a view to apply this rule in philology to a moral purpoſe; for it applies to the veracity of converſation as much as to its correctneſs; and as ſtrongly recommends unequivocal and ſimple truth, as accurate and juſt expreſſion. Scarcely any one perhaps has an adequate conception how much clear and correct ex-

* Locke.

preſſions

preſſions favour the elucidation of truth; and the ſide of truth is obviouſly the ſide of morals; it is in fact one and the ſame cauſe; and it is of courſe the ſame cauſe with that of true religion alſo.

It is therefore no worthleſs part of education to ſtudy the preciſe meaning of words, and the appropriate ſignification of language. To this end I know no better method than to accuſtom young perſons very early to a habit of defining common words and things; for, as definition ſeems to lie at the root of correctneſs, to be accuſtomed to define Engliſh words in Engliſh, would improve the underſtanding more than barely to know what thoſe words are called in French or Italian. Or rather, one uſe of learning other languages is, becauſe definition is often involved in etymology; that is, ſince many Engliſh words take their derivation from foreign languages, they cannot be ſo accurately underſtood without ſome knowledge of thoſe languages: but preciſion of any

kind,

kind, either moral or philological, too ſeldom finds its way into the education of women.

It is perhaps going out of my province to obſerve, that it might be well if young *men* alſo, before they entered on the world, were to be furniſhed with correct definitions of certain words, the uſe of which is become rather ambiguous. For inſtance; they ſhould be provided with a good definition of the word *honour* in the faſhionable ſenſe, ſhewing what vices it includes, and what virtues it does not include: the term *good company*, which even the courtly Petronius of our days has defined as ſometimes including not a few immoral and diſreputable characters; *religion*, which in the various ſenſes aſſigned it by the world, ſometimes means ſuperſtition, ſometimes fanaticiſm, and ſometimes a mere diſpoſition to attend on any kind of form of worſhip: the word *goodneſs*, which is made to mean every thing that is not notoriouſly bad; and ſometimes even that too,

too, if what is notoriouſly bad be accompanied by good humour, pleaſing manners, and a little alms-giving. By theſe means they would go forth armed againſt many of the falſe opinions which through the abuſe or ambiguous meaning of words paſs ſo current in the world.

But to return to the youthful part of that ſex which is the more immediate object of this little work. With correct definition they ſhould alſo be taught to ſtudy the ſhades of words, and this not merely with a view to accuracy of expreſſion, but to moral truth.

It may be thought ridiculous to aſſert, that morals have any connection with the purity of language, or that the preciſion of truth may be violated through defect of critical exactneſs in the three degrees of compariſon: yet how frequently do we hear from the dealers in ſuperlatives, of "moſt admirable, ſuper-excellent, and "quite perfect" people, who, to plain perſons, not bred in the ſchool of exaggeration,

aggeration, would appear mere common characters, not riſing above the level of mediocrity! By this negligence in the juſt application of words, we ſhall be as much miſled by theſe trope and figure ladies, when they degrade as when they panegyrize; for to a plain and ſober judgment, a tradeſman may not be "the "moſt good-for-nothing fellow that ever "exiſted," merely becauſe it was impoſſible for him to execute in an hour an order which required a week; a lady may not be "the moſt hideous fright the world ever "ſaw," though the make of her gown may have been obſolete for a month; nor may one's young friend's father be "a "monſter of cruelty," though he may be a quiet gentleman who does not chooſe to live at watering-places, but likes to have his daughter ſtay at home with him in the country.

But of all the parts of ſpeech the interjection is the moſt abundantly in uſe with the hyperbolical fair ones. Would it could

could be added that theſe emphatical expletives (if I may make uſe of a contradictory term) were not ſometimes tinctured with profaneneſs! Though I am perſuaded that idle habit is more at the bottom of this deep offence than intended impiety, yet there is ſcarcely any error of youthful talk which wants ſeverer caſtigation. And an habit of exclamation ſhould be rejected by poliſhed people as vulgar, even if it were not abhorred as profane.

The habit of exaggerating trifles, together with the grand female failing of exceſſive mutual flattery, and elaborate general profeſſions of fondneſs and attachment, is inconceivably cheriſhed by the voluminous private correſpondences in which ſome girls are indulged. A facility of ſtyle, and an eaſy turn of expreſſion, are acquiſitions ſaid to be derived from an early interchange of ſentiments by letter-writing; but theſe would be dearly purchaſed by the ſacrifice of that truth, ſobriety, and correctneſs of language, and

that

that ingenuous ſimplicity of character and manners ſo lovely in female youth.

But antecedent to this *epiſtolary period* of life, they ſhould have been accuſtomed to the moſt ſcrupulous exactneſs in whatever they relate. They ſhould maintain the moſt critical accuracy in *facts*, in *dates*, in *numbering*, in *deſcribing*, in ſhort, in whatever pertains, either directly or indirectly, cloſely or remotely, to the great fundamental principle, *Truth*. It is ſo very difficult for perſons of great livelineſs to reſtrain themſelves within the ſober limits of ſtrict veracity, either in their aſſertions or narrations, eſpecially when a little undue indulgence of fancy is apt to procure for them the praiſe of genius and ſpirit, that this reſtraint is one of the earlieſt principles which ſhould be worked into the youthful mind.

The converſation of young females is alſo in danger of being overloaded with epithets. As in the warm ſeaſon of youth hardly any thing is ſeen in the true point of

viſion,

vision, ſo hardly any thing is named in naked ſimplicity; and the very ſenſibility of the feelings is partly a cauſe of the extravagance of the expreſſion. But here, as in other points, the ſacred writers, particularly of the New Teſtament, preſent us with the pureſt models; and its natural and unlaboured ſtyle of expreſſion is perhaps not the meaneſt evidence of the truth of the Goſpel. There is throughout the whole narratives, no overcharged character, no elaborate deſcription, nothing ſtudiouſly emphatical, as if truth of itſelf were weak, and wanted to be helped out. There is little panegyric, and leſs invective; none but on great, and awful, and juſtifiable occaſions. The authors record their own faults with the ſame honeſty as if they were the faults of other men, and the faults of other men with as little amplification as if they were their own. There is perhaps no book in which adjectives are ſo ſparingly uſed. A modeſt ſtatement of the fact, with no colouring and little com-

ment, with little emphaſis and no varniſh, is the example held out to us for correcting the exuberances of paſſion and of language, by that divine volume which furniſhes us with the ſtill more important rule of faith and ſtandard of practice. Nor is the truth lowered by any feebleneſs, nor the ſpirit diluted, nor the impreſſion weakened by this ſoberneſs and moderation; for with all this plainneſs there is ſo much force, that a few ſimple touches and artleſs ſtrokes of Scripture characters convey a ſtronger outline of the perſon delineated, than is ſometimes given by the moſt elaborate and finiſhed portrait of more artificial hiſtorians.

If it be objected to this remark, that many parts of the ſacred writings abound in a lofty, figurative, and even hyperbolical ſtyle; this objection applies chiefly to the writings of the Old Teſtament, and to the prophetical and poetical parts of that. But the metaphorical and florid ſtyle of thoſe writings is diſtinct from the inaccurate and over-ſtrained expreſſion we have

been cenſuring; for that only is inaccuracy which leads to a falſe and inadequate conception in the reader or hearer. The lofty ſtyle of the Eaſtern, and of other heroic poetry, does not ſo miſlead: for the metaphor is underſtood to be a metaphor, and the imagery is underſtood to be ornamental. The ſtyle of the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament is not, it is true, plain in oppoſition to figurative, nor ſimple in oppoſition to florid; but it is plain and ſimple in the beſt ſenſe, as oppoſed to falſe principles and falſe taſte; it raiſes no wrong idea; it gives an exact impreſſion of the thing it means to convey; and its very tropes and figures, though bold, are never unnatural or affected: when it embelliſhes, it does not miſlead; even when it exaggerates, it does not miſrepreſent; if it be hyperbolical, it is ſo either in compliance with the genius of Oriental language, or in compliance with contemporary cuſtoms, or becauſe the ſubject is one which will be moſt forcibly impreſſed by a ſtrong figure. The loftineſs of the expreſſion deducts nothing

thing from the weight of the circumſtance; the imagery animates the reader without miſleading him; the boldeſt illuſtration, while it dilates his conception of the ſubject, detracts nothing from its ſimplicity; and truth, inſtead of being injured by the opulence of the figures, contrives to make them freſh and varied avenues to the heart and the underſtanding.

CHAP. X.

On Religion.—The neceſſity and duty of early inſtruction ſhewn by analogy with human learning.

It has been the faſhion of our late innovators in philoſophy, who have written ſome of the moſt brilliant and popular treatiſes on education, to decry the practice of early inſtilling religious knowledge into the minds of children: it has been alleged that it is of the utmoſt importance to the cauſe of truth, that the mind of man ſhould be kept free from prepoſſeſſions; and in particular, that every one ſhould be left to form ſuch judgment on religious ſubjects as may ſeem beſt to his own reaſon in maturer years.

This ſentiment has received ſome countenance from thoſe better characters who have

have wiſhed, on the faireſt principle, to encourage free inquiry in religion; but it has been puſhed to the blameable exceſs here cenſured, chiefly by the new philoſophers; who, while they profeſs only an ingenuous zeal for truth, are in fact ſlily endeavouring to deſtroy Chriſtianity itſelf, by diſcountenancing, under the plauſible pretence of free inquiry, all attention whatever to the religious education of our youth.

It is undoubtedly our duty, while we are inſtilling principles into the tender mind, to take peculiar care that thoſe principles be ſound and juſt; that the religion we teach be the religion of the Bible, and not the inventions of human error or ſuperſtition: that the principles we infuſe into others, be ſuch as we ourſelves have well ſcrutinized, and not the reſult of our credulity or bigotry; nor the mere hereditary, unexamined prejudices of our own undiſcerning childhood. It may alſo be granted, that it is the duty of every parent to inform the youth, that when his faculties

ties shall have ſo unfolded themſelves, as to enable him to examine for himſelf thoſe principles which the parent is now inſtilling, it will be his duty ſo to examine them.

But after making theſe conceſſions, I would moſt ſeriouſly inſiſt that there are certain leading and fundamental truths; that there are certain ſentiments on the ſide of Chriſtianity, as well as of virtue and benevolence, in favour of which every child *ought* to be prepoſſeſſed; and may it not be alſo added, that to expect to keep the mind void of all prepoſſeſſion, even upon any ſubject, appears to be altogether a vain and impracticable attempt? an attempt, the very ſuggeſtion of which argues much ignorance of human nature.

Let it be obſerved here, that we are not combating the infidel; that we are not producing evidences and arguments in *favour* of Chriſtianity, or trying to win over the aſſent of the reader to that which he diſputes; but that we are taking it for granted,

granted, not only that Chriſtianity is true, but that we are addreſſing thoſe who believe it to be true; an aſſumption which has been made throughout this work. Aſſuming, therefore, that there are religious principles which are true, and which ought to be communicated in the moſt effectual manner, the next queſtion which ariſes ſeems to be, at what age and in what manner theſe ought to be inculcated? That it ought to be at an early period we have both the example and the command of Chriſt; for he himſelf attended his parents in their annual public devotions at Jeruſalem during his own infancy; and afterwards in his public miniſtration encouragingly ſaid, "Suffer *little* children to come unto me."

But here conceding for the ſake of argument what yet cannot be conceded, that ſome good reaſons *may* be brought in favour of delay; allowing that ſuch impreſſions as are communicated early may not be very deep; allowing them even to become totally effaced by the ſubſequent

corruptions of the heart and of the world; ſtill I would illuſtrate the importance of early infuſing religious knowledge, by an alluſion drawn from the power of early habit in human learning. Put the caſe, for inſtance, of a perſon who was betimes initiated in the rudiments of claſſical ſtudies. Suppoſe him after quitting ſchool to have fallen, either by a courſe of idleneſs or of vulgar purſuits, into a total neglect of ſtudy. Should this perſon at any future period happen to be called to ſome profeſſion, which ſhould oblige him, as we ſay, to rub up his Greek and Latin; his memory ſtill retaining the unobliterated though faint traces of his early purſuits, he will be able to recover his neglected learning with leſs difficulty than he could now begin to learn; for he is not again obliged to ſet out with ſtudying the ſimple elements; they come back on being purſued; they are found on being ſearched for; the decayed images aſſume ſhape, and ſtrength, and colour; he has in his mind

firſt principles to which to recur; the rules of grammar which he has allowed himſelf to violate, he has not however forgotten; he will recall neglected ideas, he will reſume ſlighted habits far more eaſily than he could now begin to acquire new ones. I appeal to clergymen who are called to attend the dying beds of ſuch as have been bred in groſs and ſtupid ignorance of religion, for the juſtneſs of this compariſon. Do they not find that theſe unhappy people have no ideas in common with them? that *they* poſſeſs no intelligible medium by which to make themſelves underſtood? that the perſons to whom they are addreſſing themſelves have no firſt principles to which they can be referred? that they are ignorant, not only of the ſcience, but the language of Chriſtianity?

But at worſt, whatever be the event to the child, though in general we are encouraged, from the tenor of Scripture and the courſe of experience, to hope that

that

that event would be favourable, is it nothing for the parent to have acquitted himself of this prime duty? And will not the parent who ſo acquits himſelf, with better reaſon and more lively hope, ſupplicate the Father of mercies for the reclaiming of a prodigal, who has wandered out of that right path in which he has ſet him forward, than for the converſion of a neglected creature, to whoſe feet the Goſpel had never been offered as a light? And how different will be the dying reflections even of that parent whoſe earneſt endeavours have been unhappily defeated by the ſubſequent and voluntary perverſion of his child, from his who will reaſonably aggravate his pangs by transferring the ſins of his neglected child to the number of his own tranſgreſſions.

And to ſuch well-intentioned but ill-judging parents as really wiſh their children to be hereafter pious, but erroneouſly withhold inſtruction till the more advanced period preſcribed by the great maſter of

ſplendid paradoxes* ſhall arrive; who can aſſure them that while they are withholding the good ſeed, the great and ever-vigilant enemy, who aſſiduouſly ſeizes hold on every opportunity which *we* ſlight, and cultivates every advantage which *we* neglect, may not be ſtocking the fallow ground with tares? Nay, who in this fluctuating ſcene of things can be aſſured, even if this were not certainly to be the caſe, that to them the promiſed period ever ſhall arrive at all? Who ſhall aſcertain to them that their now neglected child ſhall certainly live to receive the delayed inſtruction? Who can aſſure them that they themſelves will live to communicate it?

It is almoſt needleſs to obſerve that parents who are indifferent about religion, much more thoſe who treat it with ſcorn, are not likely to be anxious on this ſubject; it is therefore the attention of *religious* parents which is here chiefly called

* Rouſſeau.

upon;

upon; and the more ſo, as there ſeems, on this point, an unaccountable negligence in many of theſe, whether it ariſe from indolence, falſe principles, or whatever other motive.

But independent of knowledge, it is ſomething, nay, let philoſophers ſay what they will, it is much, to give youth *prepoſſeſſions* in favour of religion, to ſecure their *prejudices* on its ſide before you turn them adrift into the world; a world in which, before they can be completely armed with arguments and reaſons, they will be aſſailed by numbers whoſe prepoſſeſſions and prejudices, far more than *their* arguments and reaſons, attach them to the other ſide. Why ſhould not the Chriſtian youth furniſh himſelf in a good cauſe with the ſame natural armour which the enemies of religion wear in a bad one? It is certain that to ſet out with ſentiments in favour of the religion of our country is no more an error or a weakneſs, than to grow up with a fondneſs for our country itſelf.

If

If the love of our country be judged a fair principle, ſurely a Chriſtian, who is "a citizen of no mean city," may lawfully have *his* attachments too. If patriotiſm be an honeſt prejudice, Chriſtianity is not a ſervile one. Nay, let us teach the youth to hug his prejudices rather than to acquire that verſatile and accommodating citizenſhip of the world, by which he may be an Infidel in Paris, a Papiſt at Rome, and a Muſſulman at Cairo.

Let me not be ſuppoſed ſo to elevate politics, or ſo to depreſs religion, as to make any compariſon of the value of the one with the other, when I obſerve, that between the true Britiſh patriot and the true Chriſtian, there will be this common reſemblance: the more deeply each of them inquires, the more will he be confirmed in his reſpective attachment, the one to his country, the other to his religion. I ſpeak with reverence of the immeaſurable diſtance; but the more the one preſſes on the firm arch of our conſtitution,

and

and the other on that of Chriſtianity, the ſtronger he will find them both. Each challenges ſcrutiny; each has nothing to dread but from ſhallow politicians, and ſhallow philoſophers; in each intimate knowledge juſtifies prepoſſeſſion; in each inveſtigation confirms attachment.

If we divide the human being into three component parts, the bodily, the intellectual, and the ſpiritual, is it not reaſonable that a portion of care and attention be aſſigned to each in ſome degree adequate to its importance? Should I venture to ſay a *due* portion, a portion adapted to the real comparative value of each, would not that condemn in one word the whole ſyſtem of modern education? Yet the rational and intellectual part being avowedly more valuable than the bodily, while the ſpiritual and immortal part exceeds even the intellectual ſtill more than that ſurpaſſes what is corporeal; is it then acting according to the common rules of proportion; is it acting on the principles of diſtri-

diſtributive juſtice; is it acting with that good ſenſe and right judgment with which the ordinary buſineſs of this world is uſually tranſacted, to give the largeſt proportion of time and care to that which is worth the leaſt? Is it fair that what relates to the body and the organs of the body, I mean thoſe accompliſhments which addreſs themſelves to the eye and the ear, ſhould occupy almoſt the whole thoughts; that the intellectual part ſhould be robbed of its due proportion, and that the ſpiritual part ſhould have almoſt no proportion at all? Is not this preparing your children for an awful diſappointment in the tremendous day when they ſhall be ſtripped of that body, of thoſe ſenſes and organs, which have been made almoſt the ſole objects of their attention, and ſhall feel themſelves left in poſſeſſion of nothing but that ſpiritual part which in education was ſcarcely taken into the account of their exiſtence?

Surely

Surely it ſhould be thought a reaſonable compromiſe (and I am in fact under-valuing the object for the importance of which I plead) to ſuggeſt, that at leaſt two thirds of that time which is now uſurped by externals, ſhould be reſtored to the rightful owners, the underſtanding and the heart; and that the acquiſition of religious knowledge in early youth, ſhould at leaſt be *no leſs* an object of ſedulous attention than the cultivation of human learning or of outward embelliſhments. It is alſo not unreaſonable to ſuggeſt, that we ſhould in Chriſtianity, as in arts, ſciences, or languages, begin with the beginning, ſet out with the ſimple elements, and thus "go on unto perfection."

Why in teaching to draw do you begin with ſtraight lines and curves, till by gentle ſteps the knowledge of outline and proportion be attained, and your picture be completed; never loſing ſight, however, of the elementary lines and curves? why in muſic do you ſet out with the ſimple notes, and

purſue

purſue the acquiſition through all its progreſs, ſtill in every ſtage recurring to the notes? why in the ſcience of numbers do you invent the ſimpleſt methods of conveying juſt ideas of computation, ſtill referring to the tables which involve the fundamental rules? why in the ſcience of quantity do men introduce the pupil at firſt to the plaineſt diagrams, and clear up one difficulty before they allow another to appear? why in teaching languages to the youth do you ſedulouſly infuſe into his mind the rudiments of ſyntax? why in parſing is he led to refer every word to its part of ſpeech, to reſolve every ſentence into its elements, to reduce every term to its original, and from the firſt caſe of nouns, and the firſt tenſe of verbs, to explain their formations, changes, and dependencies, till the principles of language become ſo grounded, that, by continually recurring to the rules, the ſpeaking and writing correctly are fixed into a habit? why all this, but becauſe you uniformly

wiſh him to be grounded in each of his acquirements? why, but becauſe you are perſuaded that a ſlight, and ſlovenly, and ſuperficial, and irregular way of inſtruction will never train him to excellence in any thing?

Do young perſons then become muſicians, and painters, and linguiſts, and mathematicians, by early ſtudy and regular labour; and ſhall they become Chriſtians by accident? or rather, is not this acting on that very principle of Dogberry, at which you probably have often laughed? Is it not ſuppoſing that religion, like "reading and writing, comes by Nature?" Shall all thoſe accompliſhments "which "periſh in the uſing," be ſo aſſiduouſly, ſo ſyſtematically taught? Shall all theſe habits, which are limited to the things of this world, be ſo carefully formed, ſo perſiſted in, as to be interwoven with our very make, ſo as to become as it were a part of ourſelves; and ſhall that knowledge which is to make us "wiſe unto ſalvation" be

picked

picked up at random, curſorily, or perhaps not picked up at all? Shall that difficult divine ſcience which requires "line upon "line, and precept upon precept," here a little and there a little; that knowledge which parents, even under a darker diſpenſation, were required "to teach their chil-"dren *diligently*, and to talk of it when "they ſat down in their houſe, and when "they walked by the way, and when they "lay down, and when they roſe up;" ſhall this knowledge be by Chriſtian parents deferred, or taught ſlightly; or be ſuperſeded by things of little comparative worth?

Shall the lively period of youth, the ſoft and impreſſible ſeaſon when laſting habits are formed, when the ſeal cuts deep into the yielding wax, and the impreſſion is more likely to be clear, and ſtrong, and laſting; ſhall this warm and favourable ſeaſon be ſuffered to ſlide by, without being turned to the great purpoſe for which not only youth, but life, and

breath, and being were beſtowed? Shall not that "faith without which it is im-"poſſible to pleaſe God;" ſhall not that "holineſs without which no man can ſee "the Lord;" ſhall not that knowledge which is the foundation of faith and practice; ſhall not that charity without which all knowledge is ſounding braſs and a tinkling cymbal, be impreſſed, be inculcated, be enforced, as early, as conſtantly, as fundamentally, with the ſame earneſt puſhing on to continual progreſs, with the ſame conſtant reference to firſt principles, as are uſed in the caſe of thoſe arts which merely adorn human life? Shall we not ſeize the happy period when the memory is ſtrong, the mind and all its powers vigorous and active, the imagination buſy and all alive; the heart flexible, the temper ductile, the conſcience tender, curioſity awake, fear powerful, hope eager, love ardent; ſhall we not ſeize this period for inculcating that knowledge, and impreſſing thoſe principles which are to form the

character, and fix the deſtination for eternity?

Or, if I may be allowed to addreſs another and a ſtill more dilatory claſs, who are for procraſtinating all concern about religion till we are driven to it by actual diſtreſs, and who do not think of praying till they are periſhing, like the ſailor who ſaid, "he thought it was always "time enough to begin to pray when the "ſtorm began." Of theſe I would aſk, ſhall we, with an unaccountable deliberation, defer our anxiety about religion till the buſy man or the diſſipated woman are become ſo immerſed in the cares of life, or ſo entangled in its pleaſures, that they will have little heart or ſpirit to embrace a new principle? a principle whoſe preciſe object it will be to condemn that very life into which they have already embarked; nay, to condemn almoſt all that they have been doing and thinking ever ſince they firſt began to act or think? Shall we, I ſay, begin now? or ſhall we ſuffer thoſe

inſtructions, to receive which requires all the concentrated powers of a ſtrong and healthy mind, to be put off till the day of excruciating pain, till the period of debility and ſtupefaction? Shall we wait for that ſeaſon, as if it were the moſt favourable for religious acquiſitions, when the ſenſes ſhall have been palled by exceſſive gratification, when the eye ſhall be tired with ſeeing, and the ear with hearing? Shall we, when the whole man is breaking up by diſeaſe or decay, expect that the dim apprehenſion will diſcern a new ſcience, or the obtuſe feelings delight themſelves with a new pleaſure? a pleaſure too, not only incompatible with many of the hitherto indulged pleaſures, but one which carries with it a ſtrong intimation that thoſe pleaſures terminate in the death of the ſoul.

But, not to loſe ſight of the important analogy on which we have already dwelt ſo much; how prepoſterous would it ſeem to you to hear any one propoſe to an illiterate

dying

dying man, to ſet about learning even the plaineſt and eaſieſt rudiments of any new art; to ſtudy the muſical notes; to conjugate an auxiliary verb; to learn, not the firſt problem in Euclid, but even the numeration table; and yet you do not think it abſurd to poſtpone religious inſtruction, on principles which, if admitted at all, muſt terminate either in ignorance, or in your propoſing too late to a dying man to begin to learn the totally unknown ſcheme of Chriſtianity. You do not think it impoſſible that he ſhould be brought to liſten to the "voice of this "charmer," when he can no longer liſten to "the voice of ſinging men and "ſinging women." You do not think it unreaſonable that immortal beings ſhould delay to devote their days to Heaven, till they have "no pleaſure in them" themſelves. You will not bring them to offer up the firſt fruits of their lips, and hearts, and lives, to their Maker, becauſe you perſuade yourſelves that he who has called

himſelf a "jealous God," may however be contented hereafter with the wretched ſacrifice of decayed appetites, and the worthleſs leavings of almoſt extinguiſhed affections.

For one cannot believe, even with all the melancholy procraſtination we ſee around us, that there is ſcarely any one, except he be a decided infidel, who does not conſider religion as at leaſt a good reverſionary thing; as an object which ought always to occupy a little remote corner of his map of life; the ſtudy of which, though it is always to be poſtponed, is however not to be finally rejected; which, though it cannot conveniently come into his preſent ſcheme of life, it is intended ſomehow or other to take up before death. This awful deception, this defect in the intellectual viſion, ariſes, partly from the bulk which the objects of time and ſenſe acquire in our eyes by their nearneſs; while the inviſible realities of eternity are but faintly diſcerned by a feeble faith,

faith, through a dim and diſtant medium. It ariſes alſo partly from a totally falſe idea of the nature of Chriſtianity, from a fatal fancy that we can repent at any future period, and that as amendment is a thing which will always be in our own power, it will be time enough to think of reforming our life, when we ſhould only think of cloſing it.

But depend upon it, that a heart long hardened, I do not mean by groſs vices merely, but by a fondneſs for the world, by an habitual and exceſſive indulgence in the pleaſures of ſenſe, will by no means be in a favourable ſtate to admit the light of divine truth, or to receive the impreſſions of divine grace. God indeed ſometimes ſhows us by an act of his ſovereignty, that this wonderful change, the converſion of a ſinner's heart, may be produced without the intervention of human means, to ſhow that the work is His. But as this is not the way in which the Almighty uſually deals with his creatures, it would be nearly

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as preposterous for men to act on this presumption, and sin on in hopes of a miraculous conversion, as it would be to take no means for the preservation of our lives, because Jesus Christ raised Lazarus from the dead.

CHAP. XI.

On the manner of inſtructing young perſons in Religion.—General remarks on the genius of Chriſtianity.

I WOULD now with great deference addreſs thoſe reſpectable characters who are really concerned about the beſt intereſt of their children; thoſe to whom Chriſtianity is indeed an important conſideration, but whoſe habits of life have hitherto hindered them from giving it its due degree in the ſcale of education.

Begin then with conſidering that religion is a part, and the moſt prominent part, in your ſyſtem of inſtruction. Do not communicate its principles in a random deſultory way; nor ſcantily ſtint this buſineſs to only ſuch ſcraps and remnants

of time as may be caſually picked up from the gleanings of other acquirements. "Will you bring to God for a ſacrifice "that which coſts you nothing?" Let the beſt part of the day, which with moſt people is the earlieſt part, be ſteadily and invariably dedicated to this work by your children, before they are tired with their other ſtudies, while the intellect is clear, the ſpirits light, and the attention unfatigued.

Confine not your inſtructions to mere verbal rituals and dry ſyſtems; but inſtruct them in a way which ſhall intereſt their feelings; by lively images, and by a warm practical application of what they read to their own hearts and circumſtances. If you do not ſtudy the great but too much ſlighted art of fixing, of commanding, of chaining the attention, you may throw away much time and labour, with little other effect than that of diſguſting your pupil and wearying yourſelf. There ſeems to be no good reaſon that while every

other

other thing is to be made amuſing, religion alone muſt be dry and uninviting. Do not fancy that a thing is good merely becauſe it is dull. Why ſhould not the moſt entertaining powers of the human mind be ſupremely conſecrated to that ſubject which is moſt worthy of their full exercise? The misfortune is, that religious learning is too often rather conſidered as an act of the memory than of the heart and feelings; and that children are turned over to the dry work of getting by rote as a taſk that which they ſhould get from example and animated converſation, from lively diſcuſſion, in which the pupil ſhould learn to bear a part. Teach them rather, as their Bleſſed Saviour taught, by intereſting parables, which, while they corrected the heart, left ſome exercise for the ingenuity in the ſolution, and for the feelings in their application. Teach, as HE taught, by ſeizing on ſurrounding objects, paſſing events, local circumſtances, peculiar characters,

racters, apt alluſions, juſt analogy, appropriate illuſtration. Call in all creation, animate and inanimate, to your aid, and accuſtom your young audience to

Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in ſtones, and good in every thing.

Even when the nature of your ſubject makes it neceſſary for you to be more plain and didactic, do not fail frequently to enliven theſe leſs engaging parts of your diſcourſe with ſome incidental imagery which ſhall captivate the fancy. Relieve what would otherwiſe be too dry and preceptive, with ſome ſtriking exemplification in point, ſome touching inſtance to be imitated, ſome awful warning to be avoided; ſomething which ſhall illuſtrate your inſtruction, which ſhall realize your poſition, which ſhall embody your idea, and give ſhape and form, colour and life, to your precept. Endeavour unremittingly to connect the reader with the ſubject, by making her feel that what you teach is neither an

abſtract

abſtract truth, nor a thing of mere general information, but that it is a buſineſs in which *ſhe herſelf* is individually and immediately concerned; in which not only her eternal ſalvation but her *preſent* happineſs is involved. Do, according to your meaſure of ability, what the Holy Spirit which indited the Scriptures has done, always take the ſenſibility of the learner into your account of the faculties which are to be worked upon. "For the doc-
"trines of the Bible," as the profound and enlightened Bacon obſerves, "are not
"propoſed to us in a naked logical form,
"but arrayed in the moſt beautiful and
"ſtriking colours which creation affords." By thoſe affecting illuſtrations uſed by Him "who knew what was in man," and therefore beſt knew how to addreſs him, it was that the unlettered audiences of Chriſt and his Apoſtles were enabled both to comprehend and to reliſh doctrines, which would not readily have made their way to their underſtandings, had they not

firſt touched their hearts; and which would have found acceſs to neither the one nor the other, had they been delivered in dry ſcholaſtic diſquiſitions. Now thoſe audiences not being learned, may be ſuppoſed to have been nearly in the ſtate of children, as to their receptive faculties, and to have required nearly the ſame ſort of inſtruction; that is, they were more capable of being affected with what was ſimple, and touching, and lively, than what was elaborate, abſtruſe, and unaffecting. Heaven and earth were made to furniſh their contributions, when man was to be taught that ſcience which was to make him wiſe unto ſalvation. If that be the pureſt eloquence which moſt perſuades, and which comes home to the heart with the fulleſt evidence and the moſt irreſiſtible force, then no eloquence is ſo powerful as that of Scripture: and an intelligent Chriſtian teacher will be admoniſhed by the mode of Scripture itſelf, how to communicate its truths with life and ſpirit; "while he is

"muſing,

"musing, the fire burns:" that fire which will preserve him from an insipid and freezing mode of instruction. He will moreover, as was said above, always carefully keep up a quick sense of the personal interest the pupil has in every religious instruction which is impressed upon him. He will teach as Paul prayed, "with the "spirit, and with the understanding also;" and in imitating this great model, he will necessarily avoid the opposite faults of two different sorts of instructors; for while some of our divines of the higher class have been too apt to preach as if mankind had only intellect, and the lower and more popular sort as if they had only passions, do you borrow what is good from both, and address your pupils as beings compounded of both understanding and affections*.

Fancy

* The zeal and diligence with which the Bishop of London's weekly lectures have been attended by persons of all ranks and descriptions, but more especially

Fancy not that the Bible is too difficult and intricate to be preſented in its own naked form, and that it puzzles and bewilders the youthful underſtanding. In all needful and indiſpenſable points of knowledge, the darkneſs of Scripture, as a great Chriſtian philoſopher * has obſerved, "is but a partial darkneſs, like that of "Egypt, which benighted only the enemies "of God, while it left his children in clear "day." It is not pretended that the Bible will *find* in the reader clear views of God and of Chriſt, of the ſoul and eternity, but that it will *give* them. And if it be really the appropriate character of Scrip-

by that claſs to whom this little work is addreſſed, is a very promiſing circumſtance for the age. And while one conſiders with pleaſure the advantages peculiarly to be derived by the young from ſo intereſting and animated an expoſition of the Goſpel, one is further led to rejoice at the countenance given by ſuch high authority to the revival of that excellent, but too much neglected practice of lectures.

* Mr. Boyle.

ture,

ture, as it tells us itself that it is, "to en-
"lighten the eyes of the *blind*," and "to
"make wise the *simple*," then it is as well calculated for the youthful and uninformed as for any other class; and as it was never expected that the greater part of Christians should be learned, so is learning, though of inestimable value in a teacher of theology, no *essential* qualification for a common Christian: for which reason Scripture truths are expressed with that clear and simple evidence adapted to the kind of assent which they require; an assent materially different from that sort of demonstration which a mathematical theorem demands. He who could bring an unprejudiced heart and an unperverted will, would bring to the Scriptures the best qualification for understanding and receiving them. And though they contain things which the pupil cannot comprehend, (as what ancient poet, historian, or orator does not,) the teacher may address to him the words which Christ addressed to Peter,

"What I do thou knoweſt not now, but "thou ſhalt know hereafter."

Young people who have been taught religion in a formal and ſuperficial way, who have had all its drudgeries and none of its pleaſures, will probably have acquired ſo little reliſh for it, as to conſider the continued proſecution of their religious ſtudies as a badge of their tutelage, as a mark that they are ſtill under ſubjection; and will look forward with impatience to the hour of their emancipation from the lectures on Chriſtianity, as the æra of their promiſed liberty. They will long for the period when its leſſons ſhall ceaſe to be delivered; will conclude that, having once attained ſuch an age, and arrived at the required proficiency, the object will be accompliſhed and the labour at an end. But let not *your* children "ſo learn Chriſt." Apprize them that no ſpecific day will ever arrive on which they ſhall ſay, I *have* attained; but inform them, that every acquiſition muſt be followed up; knowledge

muſt

muſt be increaſed; prejudices ſubdued; good habits rooted; evil ones eradicated; diſpoſitions ſtrengthened; principles confirmed; till, going on from light to light, and from ſtrength to ſtrength, they come "to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt."

But though ſerious inſtruction will not only be unintereſting but irkſome if conveyed to youth in a cold didactic way, yet if their affections are ſuitably engaged, while their underſtandings are kept in exerciſe, their hearts, ſo far from neceſſarily revolting, as ſome inſiſt, will often receive the moſt ſolemn truths with alacrity. It is, as we have repeated, the manner which revolts them, and not the thing.

As it is notorious that men of wit and ſprightly fancy have been the moſt formidable enemies to Chriſtianity; while men, in whom thoſe talents have been conſecrated to God, have been ſome of her moſt uſeful champions, take particular care to preſs that ardent and ever-active power, the

imagination, into the ſervice of religion; this bright and buſy faculty will be leading its poſſeſſor into perpetual peril, and is an enemy of peculiar potency till it come to be employed in the cauſe of God. It is a lion, which though worldly prudence indeed may *chain* ſo as to prevent outward miſchief, yet the malignity remains within; but when ſanctified by Chriſtianity, the imagination is a lion *tamed*; you have all the benefit of its ſtrength and its activity, diveſted of its miſchief. God never beſtowed that noble but reſtleſs faculty, without intending it to be an inſtrument of his own glory; though it has been too often ſet up in rebellion againſt him; becauſe, in its youthful ſtirrings, while all alive and full of action, it has not been ſeized upon to fight for its rightful Sovereign, but was early enliſted with little oppoſition under the banners of the world, the fleſh, and the devil. Religion is the only ſubject in which, under the guidance of a ſevere and ſober-minded prudence, this diſcurſive

faculty

faculty can ſafely ſtretch its powers and expand its energies. But let it be remembered, that it muſt be a ſound and genuine Chriſtianity which can alone ſo chaſtiſe and regulate the imagination, as to reſtrain it from thoſe errors and exceſſes into which a falſe, a miſtaken, an irregular religion, has too often led its injudicious and ill-inſtructed profeſſor. Some of the moſt fatal extremes into which a wild enthuſiaſm or a frightful ſuperſtition has plunged its unhappy votaries, have been owing to the want of a due direction, of a ſtrict and holy caſtigation of this ever-working faculty. To ſecure imagination therefore on the ſafe ſide, and, if I may change the metaphor, to put it under the direction of its true pilot in the ſtormy voyage of life, is like engaging thoſe potent elements, the wind and tide, in your favour.

In your communications with young people, take care to convince them that as religion is not a buſineſs to be laid aſide with the leſſon, ſo neither is it a ſingle branch of duty; ſome detached thing, which

like the acquiſition of an art or a language, is to be practiſed ſeparately, and to have its diſtinct periods and modes of operation. But let them underſtand, that common acts, by the ſpirit in which they are to be performed, are to be made acts of religion; that Chriſtianity may be conſidered as having ſomething of that influence over the conduct which external grace has over the manners; for as it is not the performance of ſome particular act which denominates any one to be graceful, grace being a ſpirit diffuſed through the whole ſyſtem, which animates every ſentiment, and informs every action; as ſhe who has true perſonal grace has it uniformly, and is not ſometimes awkward and ſometimes elegant; does not ſometimes lay it down and ſometimes take it up; ſo religion is not an occaſional act, but an indwelling principle, an inwrought habit, a pervading and informing ſpirit, from which indeed every act derives all its life, and energy, and beauty.

Give

Give them clear views of the broad diſcrimination between practical religion and worldly morality; in ſhort, between the virtues of Chriſtians and of Pagans. Show them that no good qualities are genuine but ſuch as flow from the religion of Chriſt. Let them learn that the virtues which the better ſort of people, who yet are deſtitute of true Chriſtianity, inculcate and practiſe, reſemble thoſe virtues which have the love of God for their motive, juſt as counterfeit coin reſembles ſterling gold; they may have, it is true, certain points of reſemblance with the others; they may be bright and ſhining; they have perhaps the image and the ſuperſcription, but they ever want the true diſtinguiſhing properties; they want ſterling value, purity, and weight. They may indeed paſs current in the traffic of this world, but when brought to the touchſtone, they will be found full of alloy; when weighed in the balance of the ſanctuary, "they will be found wanting;" they will not ſtand that final trial which

is to ſeparate "the precious from the "vile;" they will not abide the day "of *his* coming who is like a refiner's "fire."

One error into which even ſome good people are apt to fall, is that of endeavouring to deceive young minds by temporiſing expedients. In order to allure them to become religious, they exhibit falſe, or faint, or inadequate views of Chriſtianity; and while they repreſent it as it really is, as a life of ſuperior happineſs and advantage, they conceal its difficulties, and like the Jeſuitical Chineſe miſſionaries, extenuate, or ſink, or deny, ſuch parts of it as are leaſt alluring to human pride. In attempting to diſguiſe its principle, they deſtroy its efficacy. But beſides that, the project fails with them as it did with the Jeſuits; all fraud is bad in itſelf; and a pious fraud is a contradiction in terms which ought to be buried in the rubbiſh of papal deſolation.

Inſtead

Inſtead of repreſenting to the young Chriſtian, that it may be poſſible by a prudent ingenuity at once to purſue, with equal ardour and ſucceſs, worldly fame, and eternal glory, would it not be more honeſt to tell him fairly and unambiguouſly that there are two diſtinct roads between which there is a broad boundary line? that there are two contending and irreconcileable intereſts? that he muſt forſake the one if he would cleave to the other? that there are two ſorts of characters at eternal variance? that he muſt renounce the one if he is in earneſt for the other? that nothing ſhort of abſolute deciſion can make a confirmed Chriſtian? Point out the different ſorts of promiſes annexed to theſe different ſorts of characters. Confeſs in the language of Chriſt how the man of the world often obtains (and it is the natural courſe of human things) the recompence he ſedulouſly ſeeks. "Verily "I ſay unto you they have their reward."

Explain

Explain the beatitudes on the other hand, and unfold what kind of ſpecific reward is there individually promiſed to its concomitant virtue. Show your pupil that to that "poverty of ſpirit" to which the kingdom of heaven is promiſed, it would be inconſiſtent to expect that the recompence of human commendation ſhould be alſo attached; that to that "purity of heart" to which the beatific viſion is annexed, it would be unreaſonable to ſuppoſe you can unite the praiſe of licentious wits, or the admiration of a catch-club. Theſe will be beſtowed on their appropriate and correſponding merits. Do not inliſt them under falſe colours; diſappointment will produce deſertion. Different ſorts of rewards are attached to different ſorts of ſervices; and while you truly aſſert that religious ways are "ways of pleaſantneſs, "and all her paths are peace," take care that you do not lead them to depend too excluſively on worldly happineſs and earthly

earthly peace, for theſe make no part of the covenant; they may be ſuperadded, but they were never ſtipulated in the contract.

But if, in order to attract the young to a religious courſe, you diſingenuouſly conceal its difficulties, while you are enlarging upon its pleaſures, you will tempt them to diſtruſt the truth of Scripture itſelf. For what will they think, not only of a few detached texts, but of the general caſt and colour of the Goſpel when contraſted with your repreſentation of it? What notion will they conceive of "the ſtrait gate" and "narrow way?" of the amputation of a "right hand?" of the exciſion of a "right eye?" of the other ſtrong metaphors by which the Chriſtian warfare is ſhadowed out? of "crucifying the "fleſh?" of "mortifying the old man?" of "dying unto ſin?" of "overcoming "the world?" Do you not think their meek and compaſſionate Saviour who died for your children loved them as well as

you love them? And if this were his language, ought it not to be yours? It is the language of true love; of that love with which a merciful God loved the world, when he ſpared not his own Son. Do not then try to conceal from them, that the life of a Chriſtian is neceſſarily oppoſite to the life of the world; and do not ſeek, by a vain attempt at accommodation, to reconcile that difference which Chriſt himſelf has pronounced to be irreconcileable.

May it not be partly owing to the want of a due introduction to the knowledge of the real nature and ſpirit of religion, that ſo many young Chriſtians, who ſet out in a fair and flouriſhing way, decline and wither when they come to perceive the requiſitions of experimental Chriſtianity? requiſitions which they had not ſuſpected of making any part of the plan; and from which, when they afterwards diſcover them, they ſhrink back, as not prepared for the unexpected conteſt.

People

People are no more to be cheated into religion than into learning. The ſame ſpirit which influences your oath in a court of juſtice ſhould influence your diſcourſe in that court of equity—your family. Your children ſhould be told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. It is unneceſſary to add, that it muſt be done gradually and diſcreetly. We know whoſe example we have for poſtponing that which the mind is not yet prepared to receive: "I have many things "yet to ſay to you, but ye cannot bear "them *now*." Accuſtom them to reaſon by analogy. Explain to them that great *worldly* attainments are never made without great ſacrifices; that the merchant cannot become rich without induſtry; the ſtateſman eminent without labour; the ſcholar learned without ſtudy; the hero renowned without danger: would it not then, on human principles, be unreaſonable to think that the Chriſtian alone ſhould obtain a triumph without a warfare?

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the higheſt prize with the loweſt exertions? an eternal crown without a preſent croſs? and that heaven is the only reward which the idle may reckon upon? No: though ſalvation "be the *gift* of God," yet it muſt be "*worked out*." Convince your young friends, however, that in this caſe the difficulty of the battle bears no proportion to the prize of the victory. In one reſpect, indeed, the point of reſemblance fails, and that moſt advantageouſly for the Chriſtian; for while, even by the moſt probable means, which are the union of talents with diligence, no human proſperity can be inſured to the worldly candidate; while the moſt ſucceſsful adventurer may fail by the fault of another; while the beſt concerted project of the ſtateſman may be cruſhed; the braveſt hero loſe the battle; the brighteſt genius fail of getting bread; and, while, moreover, the pleaſure ariſing even from ſucceſs in theſe may be no ſooner taſted than it is poiſoned by a more pro-

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ſperous rival; the perſevering Chriſtian is ſafe and certain of obtaining *his* object; no misfortunes can defeat *his* hope; no competition can endanger *his* ſucceſs; for though another gain, he will not loſe; nay, the ſucceſs of another, ſo far from diminiſhing his gain, is an addition to it; the more he diffuſes, the richer he grows; his bleſſings are enlarged by communication; and that mortal hour which cuts off for ever the hopes of worldly men, crowns and conſummates his.

Beware at the ſame time of ſetting up any act of ſelf-denial or mortification as the *procuring* cauſe of ſalvation. This would be a preſumptuous project to *purchaſe* that eternal life which is declared to be the "free *gift* of God." This would be to ſend your children, not to the Goſpel to learn their Chriſtianity, but to the Monks and Aſcetics of the middle ages; it would be ſending them to Peter the Hermit, and the holy fathers of the Deſert, and not to Peter the Apoſtle and his

Divine Maſter. Mortification is not the price; it is nothing more than the diſcipline of a ſoul of which ſin is the diſeaſe, the diet preſcribed by the great phyſician. Without this guard the young devout Chriſtian would be led to fancy that abſtinence, pilgrimage, and penance might be adopted as the cheap ſubſtitute for the ſubdued deſire, the reſiſted temptation, the conquered corruption, and the obedient will; and would be almoſt in as much danger, on the one hand, of ſelf-righteouſneſs ariſing from auſterities and mortification, as ſhe would be, on the other, from ſelf-gratification in the indulgences of the world. And while you carefully impreſs on her the neceſſity of living a life of ſtrict obedience if ſhe would pleaſe God, do not neglect to remind her alſo that a complete renunciation of her own performances as a ground of merit, *purchaſing* the favour of God by their own intrinſic worth, is included in that obedience.

It

It is of the laſt importance, in ſtamping on young minds a true impreſſion of the genius of Chriſtianity, to poſſeſs them with a conviction that it is the purity of the motive which not only gives worth and beauty, but which, in a Chriſtian ſenſe, gives life and ſoul to the beſt action: nay, that while a right intention will be acknowledged and accepted at the final judgment, even without the act, the act itſelf will be diſowned which wanted the baſis of a pure deſign. "Thou didſt "well that it was in thy *heart* to build "me a temple," ſaid the Almighty to that Monarch whom yet he permitted not to build it. How many ſplendid actions will be rejected in the great day of retribution, to which ſtatues and monuments have been raiſed on earth, while their almoſt deified authors ſhall be as much confounded at their own unexpected reprobation, as at the divine acceptance of thoſe "whoſe life the world counted madneſs."

It is worthy of remark, that "Depart from "me, I never knew you," is not the malediction denounced on the ſceptic or the ſcoffer, but on the high profeſſor, on the unfruitful worker of "miracles," on the unſanctified utterer of "prophecies;" for even acts of piety wanting the purifying principle, however they may dazzle men, offend God. Cain ſacrificed, Balaam propheſied, Rouſſeau wrote the moſt ſublime panegyric on the *Son of Mary*, VOLTAIRE BUILT A CHURCH! nay, ſo ſuperior was *his* affectation of ſanctity, that he oſtentatiouſly declared, that while others were raiſing churches to *Saints*, there was one man at leaſt who would erect his church to *God**: that God whoſe altars he was overthrowing, whoſe name he was vilifying, whoſe goſpel he was exterminating, and the very name of whoſe Son he had

* *Deo erexit Voltaire*, is the inſcription affixed by himſelf on his church at Ferney.

ſolemnly

ſolemnly pledged himſelf to blot from the face of the earth!

Though it be impoſſible here to enumerate all thoſe Chriſtian virtues which ſhould be impreſſed in the progreſs of a Chriſtian education, yet in this connection I cannot forbear mentioning one which more immediately grows out of the ſubject; and to remark that the principle which ſhould be the invariable concomitant of all inſtruction, and eſpecially of religious inſtruction, is humility. As this temper is inculcated in every page of the Goſpel; as it is deducible from every precept and every action of Chriſt; that is a ſufficient intimation that it ſhould be made to grow out of every ſtudy, that it ſhould be grafted on every acquiſition. It is the turning point, the leading principle indicative of the very genius, of the very being of Chriſtianity. This chaſtiſing quality ſhould therefore be conſtantly

made in education to operate as the only counteraction of that "knowledge which "puffeth up." Youth ſhould be taught that as humility is the diſcriminating characteriſtic of our religion, therefore a proud Chriſtian, a haughty diſciple of a crucified Maſter, furniſhes perhaps a ſtronger oppoſition in terms than the whole compaſs of language can exhibit. They ſhould be taught that humility being the appropriate grace of Chriſtianity, is preciſely the thing which makes Chriſtian and Pagan virtues *eſſentially* different. The virtues of the Romans, for inſtance, were obviouſly founded in pride; as a proof of this, they had not even a word in their copious language to expreſs humility, but what was uſed in a bad ſenſe, and conveyed the idea of meanneſs or vileneſs, of baſeneſs and ſervility. Chriſtianity ſo ſtands on its own ſingle ground, is ſo far from aſſimilating itſelf to the ſpirit of other religions, that, unlike the Roman Emperor, who though

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he would not become a Chriſtian, yet ordered that the image of Chriſt ſhould be ſet up in the Pantheon with thoſe of the heathen gods, and be worſhipped in common with them; Chriſtianity not only rejects all ſuch partnerſhips with other religions, but it pulls down their images, defaces their temples, tramples on their honours, founds its own exiſtence on the ruins of ſpurious religions and ſpurious virtues, and will be every thing when it is admitted to be any thing.

Will it be going too much out of the way to obſerve, that Chriſtian Britain retaliates upon Pagan Rome? For if the former uſed humility in a bad ſenſe, has not the latter learnt to uſe pride in a good one? May we without impertinence, venture to remark, that, in the deliberations of as honourable and upright political aſſemblies as ever adorned, or, under Providence, upheld a country; in orations which leave us nothing to envy in Attic or

Roman eloquence in their beſt days: it were to be wiſhed that we did not borrow from Rome an epithet which ſuited the genius of her religion, as much as it militates againſt that of ours? The panegyriſt of the battle of Marathon, of Platea, or of Zama, might with propriety ſpeak of a "proud day," or a "proud event," or a "proud ſucceſs." But ſurely the Chriſtian encomiaſts of the battle of the Nile might, from their abundance, ſelect an epithet better appropriated to ſuch a victory—a victory which, by preſerving Europe, has perhaps preſerved that religion which ſets its foot on the very neck of pride, and in which the conqueror himſelf, even in the firſt ardors of triumph, forgot not to aſcribe the victory to ALMIGHTY GOD. Let us leave to the enemy both the term and the thing; arrogant words being the only weapons in which we muſt ever vail to their decided ſuperiority. As we muſt deſpair of the victory, let us diſdain the conteſt.

Above

Above all things then you ſhould beware that your pupils do not take up with a vague, general, and undefined religion; but look to it that their Chriſtianity be really the religion of Chriſt. Inſtead of ſlurring over the doctrines of the Croſs, as diſreputable appendages to our religion, which are to be diſguiſed or got over as well as we can, but which are never to be dwelt upon, take care to make theſe your grand fundamental articles. Do not dilute, or explain away theſe doctrines, and by ſome elegant periphraſis *hint* at a Saviour, inſtead of making him the foundation ſtone of your ſyſtem. Do not convey primary, and plain, and awful, and indiſpenſable truths elliptically, I mean as ſomething that is to be underſtood without being expreſſed; nor ſtudy faſhionable circumlocutions to avoid names and things on which our ſalvation hangs, in order to prevent your diſcourſe from being offenſive. Perſons who are thus inſtructed in religion with more good-breeding than

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ſeriouſneſs and ſimplicity, imbibe a diſtaſte for plain ſcriptural language; and the Scriptures themſelves are ſo little in uſe with a certain faſhionable claſs of readers, that when the doctrines and language of the Bible occaſionally occur in other authors, or in converſation, they preſent a ſort of novelty and peculiarity which offend; and ſuch readers as diſuſe the Bible are apt, from a ſuppoſed delicacy of taſte, to call that preciſe and puritanical which is in fact ſound and ſcriptural. Nay, it has ſeveral times happened to the author to hear perſons of ſenſe and learning ridicule inſulated ſentiments and expreſſions that have fallen in their way, which they would have treated with decent reſpect had they known them to be, as they really were, texts of Scripture. This obſervation is hazarded with a view to enforce the importance of early communicating religious knowledge, and of infuſing an early taſte for the venerable phraſeology of Scripture.

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The perſons in queſtion thus poſſeſſing a kind of Pagan Chriſtianity, are apt to acquire a ſort of Pagan expreſſion alſo, which juſt enables them to ſpeak with complacency of the "Deity," of a "firſt "cauſe," and of "conſcience." Nay, ſome may even go ſo far as to talk of "the Founder of our religion," of the "Author of Chriſtianity," in the ſame general terms, as they would talk of the prophet of Arabia, or the lawgiver of China, of Athens, or of the Jews. But their refined ears revolt not a little at the unadorned name of Chriſt; and even the naked and unqualified term of our Saviour, or Redeemer, carries with it a queeriſh, inelegant, not to ſay a ſuſpicious ſound. They will expreſs a ſerious diſapprobation of what is wrong, under the moral term of *vice*, or the forenſic term of *crime*; but they are apt to think that the Scripture term of *ſin* has ſomething fanatical in it; and, while they

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diſcover a great reſpect for morality, they do not much reliſh holineſs, which is indeed the ſpecific and only morality of a Chriſtian. They will ſpeak readily of a man's reforming, or leaving off a vicious habit, or growing more correct in ſome individual practice; but the idea conveyed under any of the Scripture phraſes ſignifying a total change of heart, they would ſtigmatize as the very ſhibboleth of a ſect, though it is the language of a Liturgy they affect to admire, and of a Goſpel which they profeſs to receive.

CHAP. XII.

Hints ſuggeſted for furniſhing young perſons with a ſcheme of prayer.

THOSE who are aware of the ineſtimable value of prayer themſelves, will naturally be anxious not only that this duty ſhould be earneſtly inculcated on their children, but that they ſhould be taught it in the beſt manner; and *ſuch* parents need little perſuaſion or counſel on the ſubject. Yet children of decent and orderly (I will not ſay of ſtrictly religious) families are often ſo ſuperficially inſtructed in this important buſineſs, that it is not unuſual, when they are aſked what prayers they uſe, to anſwer, "the Lord's Prayer and "the *Creed*." And even ſome who are better taught, are not always made to underſtand with ſufficient clearneſs the

ſpecific diſtinction between the two; that the one is the confeſſion of their *faith*, and the other the model for their *ſupplications*. By this confuſed and indiſtinct beginning, they ſet out with a perplexity in their ideas, which is not always completely diſentangled in more advanced life.

An intelligent mother will ſeize the firſt occaſion which the child's opening underſtanding ſhall allow, for making a little courſe of lectures on the Lord's Prayer, taking every diviſion or ſhort ſentence ſeparately; for each furniſhes valuable materials for a diſtinct lecture. The child ſhould be led gradually through every part of this divine compoſition; ſhe ſhould be taught to break it into all the regular diviſions, into which indeed it ſo naturally reſolves itſelf. She ſhould be made to comprehend one by one each of its ſhort but weighty ſentences; to amplify and ſpread them out for the purpoſe of better underſtanding them, not in their moſt

extenſive

extenſive and critical ſenſe, but in their moſt ſimple and obvious meaning. For in thoſe condenſed and ſubſtantial expreſſions, every word is an ingot, and will bear beating out; ſo that the teacher's difficulty will not ſo much be what ſhe ſhall ſay as what ſhe ſhall ſuppreſs; ſo abundant is the expoſitory matter which this ſuccinct pattern ſuggeſts.

When the child has a pretty good conception of the meaning of each diviſion, ſhe ſhould then be made to obſerve the connection, relation, and dependance of the ſeveral parts of this prayer one upon another; for there is great method and connection in it. We pray that the "kingdom of God may come," as the beſt means to "hallow his name;" and that by us, the obedient ſubjects of his kingdom, "his will may be done." A judicious interpreter will obſerve how logically and conſequently one clauſe grows out of another, though ſhe will uſe neither the word logical nor conſequence; for all explana-

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tions ſhould be made in the moſt plain and familiar terms, it being words, and not things, which commonly perplex children, if, as it ſometimes happens, the teacher, though not wanting ſenſe, want perſpicuity and ſimplicity.

The young perſon, from being made a complete miſtreſs of this ſhort compoſition, (which as it is to be her guide and model through life, too much pains cannot be beſtowed on it,) will have a clearer conception, not only of its individual contents, but of prayer in general, than many ever attain, though their memory has been perhaps loaded with long and unexplained forms, which they have been accuſtomed to ſwallow in the lump without ſcrutiny, and without diſcrimination. Prayer ſhould not be ſo ſwallowed. It is a regular preſcription, which ſhould ſtand analyſis and examination: it is not a charm, the ſucceſsful operation of which depends on your blindly taking it, without knowing what is in it, and in which the good you receive is promoted by your ignorance of its contents.

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I would have it understood that by these little comments, I do not mean that the child should be put to learn dry, and to her unintelligible expositions; but that the exposition is to be colloquial. And here I must remark in general, that the teacher is sometimes unreasonably apt to relieve herself at the child's expence, by loading the *memory* of a little creature on occasions in which far other faculties should be put in exercise. The child herself should be made to furnish a good part of this extemporaneous commentary by her answers; in which answers she will be much assisted by the judgment the teacher uses in her manner of questioning. And the youthful understanding, when its powers are properly set at work, will soon strengthen by exercise, so as to furnish reasonable if not very correct answers.

Written forms of prayer are not only useful and proper, but indispensably necessary to begin with. But I will hazard the remark, that if children are thrown *exclusively* on the best forms, if they are

made to commit them to memory like a copy of verses, and to repeat them in a dry, customary way, they will produce little effect on their minds. They will not understand what they repeat, if we do not early open to them the important *scheme* of prayer. Without such an elementary introduction to this duty, they will afterwards be either ignorant or enthusiasts, or both. We should give them *knowledge* before we can expect them to make much progress in *piety*, and as a due preparative to it: Christian instruction in this resembling the sun, who, in the course of his communications, gives light before he gives heat. And to labour to excite a spirit of devotion without first infusing that knowledge, out of which it is to grow, is practically reviving the popish maxim, that Ignorance is the mother of Devotion, and virtually adopting the popish rule, of praying in an unknown tongue.

Children, let me again observe, will not attend to their prayers if they do not understand them; and they will not understand them, if they are not taught to analyse,

analyſe, to diſſect them, to know their component parts, and to methodiſe them.

It is not enough to teach them to conſider prayer under the general idea that it is an application to God for what they want, and an acknowledgment to Him for what they have. This, though true in the groſs, is not ſufficiently preciſe and correct. They ſhould learn to define and to arrange all the different parts of prayer. And as a preparative to prayer itſelf, they ſhould be impreſſed with as clear an idea as their capacity and the nature of the ſubject admit, of "HIM with whom they have to "do." His omnipreſence is perhaps, of all his attributes, that of which we may make the firſt practical uſe. Every head of prayer is founded on ſome great ſcriptural truths, which truths the little analyſis here ſuggeſted will materially aſſiſt to fix in their minds.

On the knowledge that "God is," that he is an infinitely holy Being, and that "he is the rewarder of all them that "diligently ſeek him," will be grounded

the first part of prayer, which is *adoration*. The creature devoting itself to the Creator, or *self-dedication*, next presents itself. And if they are first taught that important truth, that as needy creatures they want help, which may be done by some easy analogy, they will easily be led to understand how naturally *petition* forms a most considerable branch of prayer: and divine grace being among the things for which they are to petition, this naturally suggests to the mind the doctrine of the influences of the Holy Spirit. And when to this is added the conviction, which will be readily worked into an ingenuous mind, that as offending creatures they want pardon, the necessity of *confession* will easily be made intelligible to them. But they should be brought to understand that it must not be such a general and vague confession as awakens no sense of personal humiliation, as excites no recollection of their own more peculiar and individual faults. But it must be a confession founded on self-knowledge, which is itself to arise out of the practice of self-examination: for want of this sort

of diſcriminating habit, a well-meaning but ill-inſtructed girl may catch herſelf confeſſing the ſins of ſome other perſon, and omitting thoſe which are more eſpecially her own. On the gladneſs of heart natural to youth, it will be leſs difficult to impreſs the delightful duty of *thankſgiving*, which forms ſo conſiderable a branch of prayer. In this they ſhould be habituated to recapitulate not only their general, but to enumerate their peculiar, daily, and incidental mercies, in the ſame ſpecific manner as they ſhould have been taught to detail their *wants* in the petitionary, and their *faults* in the confeſſional part. The ſame warmth of feeling which will more readily diſpoſe them to expreſs their gratitude to God in thankſgiving, will alſo lead them more gladly to expreſs their love to their parents and friends, by adopting another indiſpenſable, and to an affectionate heart, pleaſing part of prayer, which is *interceſſion*.

When they have been made, by a plain and perſpicuous mode of inſtruction, fully

to underſtand the different nature of all theſe; and when they clearly comprehend that *adoration*, *ſelf-dedication*, *confeſſion*, *petition*, *thankſgiving*, and *interceſſion*, are diſtinct heads, which muſt not be involved in each other, you may exemplify the rules by pointing out to them theſe ſucceſſive branches in any well written form. And they will eaſily diſcern, that aſcription of glory to that God to whom we owe ſo much, and on whom we ſo entirely depend, is the concluſion into which a Chriſtian's prayer will naturally reſolve itſelf. It is hardly needful to remind the teacher that our truly Scriptural Liturgy invariably furniſhes the example of preſenting *every* requeſt in the name of the great Mediator. In the Liturgy too they will meet with the beſt exemplifications of prayers, exhibiting ſeparate ſpecimens of each of the diſtinct heads we have been ſuggeſting.

But in order that the minds of young perſons may, without labour or difficulty, be

be gradually brought into ſuch a ſtate of preparation as to be benefited by ſuch a little courſe of lectures as we have recommended; they ſhould, from the time when they were firſt able to read, have been employing themſelves at their leiſure hours, in laying in a ſtore of proviſion for their preſent demands. And here the memory may be employed to good purpoſe; for being the firſt faculty which is ripened, and which is indeed perfected when the others are only beginning to unfold themſelves, this is an intimation of Providence that it ſhould be the firſt ſeized on for the beſt uſes. It ſhould therefore be devoted to lay in a ſtock of the more eaſy and devotional parts of Scripture. The Pſalms alone are an inexhauſtible ſtore-houſe of rich materials *.

Children

* This will be ſo far from ſpoiling the cheerfulneſs, or impeding the pleaſures of childhood, that the author knows a little girl who, before ſhe was ſeven years old, had learnt the whole Pſalter through a ſecond time; and that without any

Children whoſe minds have been early well furniſhed from theſe, will be competent at nine or ten years old to produce from them, and to ſelect with no contemptible judgment ſuitable examples of all the parts of prayer; and will be able to extract and appropriate texts under each reſpective head, ſo as to exhibit, without help, complete ſpecimens of every part of prayer. By confining them entirely to the ſenſe, and nearly to the words of Scripture, they will be preſerved from enthuſiaſm, from irregularity, and conceit. By being obliged continually to apply for themſelves, they will get a habit in all their difficulties of "ſearching the Scrip-"tures," which may be uſeful to them on future and more trying occaſions. But I would at firſt *confine* them to the Bible; for were they allowed with equal freedom

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diminution of uncommon gaiety of ſpirits, or any interference with the elegant acquirements ſuited to her ſtation.

to

to ranſack other books with a view to get helps to embelliſh their little compoſitions, or rather compilations; they might be tempted to paſs off for their own what they pick up from others, which might tend at once to make them both vain and deceitful. This is a temptation to which they are too much laid open when they get extravagantly commended for any pilfered paſſage with which they decorate their little themes and letters. But in the preſent inſtance there is no danger of any ſimilar deception, for there is ſuch a ſacred ſignature ſtamped on every Scripture phraſe, that the owner's name can never be defaced or torn off from the goods, either by fraud or violence.

It would be well, if in thoſe Pſalms which children were firſt directed to get by heart, an eye were had to this their future application; and that they were employed, but without any intimation of your ſubſequent deſign, in learning ſuch as may be beſt turned to this account.

In

In the hundred and thirty-ninth, the firſt great truth to be imprinted on the young heart, the divine omnipreſence, as was before obſerved, is unfolded with ſuch a mixture of majeſtic grandeur, and ſuch an intereſting variety of intimate and local circumſtances, as is likely to ſeize on the quick and lively feelings of youth. The awful idea that that Being whom ſhe is taught to reverence, is not only *in general* "acquainted with all her ways," but that "he is about her path, and about "her bed," beſtows ſuch a ſenſe of real and preſent exiſtence on *him* of whom ſhe is apt to conceive as having his diſtant habitation only in Heaven, as will greatly help her to realize the ſenſe of his actual preſence.

The hundred and third Pſalm will open to the mind rich and abundant ſources of expreſſion for gratitude and thankſgiving, and it includes ſpiritual as well as temporal favours. It illuſtrates the compaſſionate

mercies

mercies of God by familiar and domeſtic images, of ſuch peculiar tenderneſs and exquiſite endearment, as are calculated to ſtrike upon every chord of filial fondneſs in the heart of an affectionate child. The fifty-firſt ſupplies an infinite variety of matter in whatever relates to confeſſion of ſin, or to ſupplication for the aids of the Spirit. The twenty-third abounds with captivating expreſſions of the protecting goodneſs and tender love of their heavenly Father, conveyed by paſtoral imagery of uncommon beauty and ſweetneſs: in ſhort, the greater part of theſe charming compoſitions overflows with materials for every head of prayer.

The child who, while ſhe was engaged in learning theſe Scriptures, was not aware that there was any ſpecific object in view, or any farther end to be anſwered by it, will afterwards feel an unexpected pleaſure ariſing from the application of her petty labours, when ſhe is called to draw out from her little treaſury of knowledge the

ſtores

ſtores ſhe has been inſenſibly collecting; and will be pleaſed to find that without any freſh application to ſtudy, for ſhe is now obliged to exerciſe a higher faculty than memory, ſhe has lying ready in her mind the materials with which ſhe is at length called upon to work. Her judgment muſt be ſet about ſelecting one or two, or more texts which ſhall contain the ſubſtance of every ſpecific head of prayer before noticed; and it will be a farther exerciſe to her underſtanding to concatenate the detached parts into one regular whole, occaſionally varying the arrangement as ſhe likes; that is, changing the order, ſometimes beginning with invocation, ſometimes with confeſſion; ſometimes dwelling longer on one part, ſometimes on another. As the hardſhips of a religious Sunday are often ſo pathetically pleaded, as making one of the heavy burdens of religion; and as the friends of religion are ſo often

called

called upon to mitigate its intolerable rigours, might not ſuch an exerciſe as has been here ſuggeſted help, by varying its occupations, to lighten its load?

The habits of the pupil being thus early formed, her memory, attention, and intellect being bent in a right direction, and the exerciſe invariably maintained, may one not reaſonably hope that her *affections* alſo, through divine grace, may become intereſted in the work, till ſhe will be enabled "to pray with the ſpirit "and with the underſtanding alſo?" She will now be qualified to uſe a well-compoſed form with ſerioufneſs and advantage; for ſhe will now uſe it not mechanically, but rationally. That which before appeared to her a mere maſs of good words, will now appear a ſignificant compoſition, exhibiting variety, and regularity, and beauty; and while ſhe will have the farther advantage of being enabled by her improved judgment to diſtin-

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guish and select for her own purpose such prayers as are more judicious and more scriptural, it will also habituate her to look for plan, and design, and lucid order, in other works.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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